THE KELMSCOTT PRESS
AND WILLIAM MORRIS
MASTER-CRAFTSMAN

William Morris

THE KELMSCOTT PRESS AND WILLIAM MORRIS MASTER-CRAFTSMAN. BY H. HALLIDAY SPARLING

FORSOOTH, BROTHERS, FELLOW-SHIP IS HEAVEN, AND LACK OF FELLOWSHIP IS HELL: FELLOW-SHIP IS LIFE, AND LACK OF FELLOW-SHIP IS DEATH: AND THE DEEDS THAT YE DO UPON THE EARTH, IT IS FOR FELLOWSHIP'S SAKE THAT YE DO THEM, AND THE LIFE THAT IS IN IT, THAT SHALL LIVE ON AND ON FOR EVER, AND EACH ONE OF YOU A PART OF IT, WHILE MANY A MAN'S LIFE UPON THE EARTH FROM THE EARTH SHALL WANE.

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PREFACE

THIS book is dedicated to the memory of William Morris, and therefore bears no other inscription. Planned and written as a contribution towards the understanding of his work and of himself, it is based upon some ten years of intimate contact, and of wholehearted participation in many of his activities.

Assistant-editor and then co-editor of the *Commonweal*; aiding him in dealing with his correspondence; his companion upon many journeys; proof-reader, secretary and general handyman of the Kelmscott Press from its foundation until 1894; editing the *Historyes of Troye*, *Reynard the Foxe*, *Godefrey of Boloyne*, and the unfinished *Froissart*, under his direction, work upon the *Froissart* ending only with his death; an adoring and eager disciple throughout, I may claim to be especially qualified as an interpreter of his teaching.

My grateful thanks are due to his Trustees collectively and Mr. Sydney C. Cockerell personally for their generous permission to reprint the copyright matter which forms the appendix; to Mr. Robert Steele for invaluable criticisms and suggestions upon matters of fact or opinion; to Messrs. C. T. Jacobi, late of the Chiswick Press, and Frank Colebrook, late of the *Printing Times*, for information or advice; to Mr. Horace Morgan, of Messrs. James Burn & Co., for many kindly services; to Miss Olive Percival, of Los Angeles, for an unwearied and inspiring discussion of doubts and difficulties; to Messrs. Joseph Batchelor & Sons, of Little Chart, H. Band & Co., of Brentford, and W. J. Turney & Co., of Stourbridge, for courteous replies to inquiries.

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It is but fair to add that, although I have untiringly sought help upon all points from those best able to render it, and have quoted freely from the writings of others, the responsibility for any statement of fact or expression of opinion is entirely mine. Regarding the book as my personal homage to William Morris, and a part of my personal service to the cause for which he worked and fought, wherever I have differed irreconcilably from a friend or an authority I have taken my own road.

For two reasons, one determined by feeling and the other by convenience, nobody has been "mistered" in the body of this book. To be mentioned in connexion with the Kelmscott Press or with William Morris is, in so far and in my eyes, to be immortalized, and therefore to be spoken of by an unadorned name. Then, to have maintained a conscious watchfulness for an artificial distinction between the dead and the living, or the degrees of social standing, might only too easily have detracted from due attention to points of infinitely greater importance.

By an undesigned coincidence, this preface, which completes the book, has been written on the ninetieth anniversary of William Morris's birth at Walthamstow, March 24th, 1834. *Prosit omen!*

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H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

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THE IDEA TAKES FORM

Born into a world that in most respects has been transformed, very largely through the work and influence of William Morris, the reader or student of to-day does not always find it easy to realize the full greatness of the man, or to measure the effect he produced upon the world as he found it. All the less easy because "in the study of this variant mind, always manifold and always one, he that runs may not read," and in these days we far too usually read at a run.

It is impossible to compare Morris with any other man of his own time, or of any other time, indeed, in the world's history. It has not been given to many men of any time to be masters of more than one art, and those that have been true masters of one only are none too numerous. But Morris was master of many, practising them all at the same time and together; and those whose knowledge and understanding are confined within the limits of any one art, or any one craft, are not only incapable of comprehending the Master-Craftsman who "set his triumphant hand to everything from the sampler up to the epic," but, in proportion to the narrowing of their interests and experience, are puzzled and worried by his output in the one field of activity with which they are acquainted. His poetry is not as that of others, nor his prose, nor his designs, nor anything else that is his, because he recognized and felt the underlying unity of all creative work, and could utilize the skill and experience gained in the pursuit of any one art in the pursuit of any other.

A few years later on, when the men and things of the immediate past have taken their due place in historical perspective,

when the passions of yesterday have cooled and the prejudices of to-day have diminished, Morris will begin to loom up into something like his real size. The tyrannous reign of the specialist—the "nothing-but," as Morris called him—will then, it is to be hoped, be over; and the work that Morris did may be more correctly estimated, each and every one of his achievements being reckoned as part of an organic whole, the work of Rossetti's "one vast Morris." He will no longer be regarded as a poet who strayed into the making of wallpapers, an artist who wasted himself upon the dyeing of silks and the weaving of carpets, or as a genius who lost grip upon reality and wandered off into a wilderness of Utopian dreams.

He will be recognized for what he was, one of the great men, and not far from the greatest, of his time; some of us think of all time. He has not only bequeathed us an enormous heritage of material and spiritual beauty, but has conditioned our thinking in matters of art to a degree that is comparable only to the conditioning of our thought in matters of science by Darwin. Darwin has been belittled by the little-minded and abused by the obscurantist, as has Morris, but the immortality of both is assured. Science must reckon with Darwin and art with Morris until the brain of Man is for ever at rest and his heart no longer beats.

Though this book is essentially concerned with but one, and that the latest, of all Morris's activities, in order to understand that one we shall have to take note of the others to some extent, accepting the risk of digression and repetition in our search for the truth of things; for Morris the Master-Printer was but a phase of Morris the Master-Craftsman, and the one is unintelligible unless and until the other be understood.

Book-printing as an activity to be studied or pursued did not attract him until 1888, in the fifty-fourth year of his life and the thirty-first of his working career. That he had an eye for a comely book, printed or manuscript, from the first, is proven by some of the purchases he made while still a youth; and when he founded the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in 1856, he entrusted its printing to Charles Whittingham II. at the Chiswick Press. Now that we have seen what he did himself in the way of book-printing, thirty years later, the get-up of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* looks funny enough, with its

"typographical" borders to the wrappers, the "dropped head" on the first page of each number, filled with one of the ornaments designed some years before by Charles Whittingham's daughters, Charlotte and Elizabeth, and engraved by Mary Byfield. In the first and second numbers, but not in the succeeding ones, there is a decorative initial to the first article, due to the same artists. In our eyes of to-day, the whole effect is decidedly quaint, but it was a long way above the level of its time, and, remembering what the mass of current magazines are like, one would hesitate before saying that it was not above the level of ours.

Two years later, after he had left Oxford and was living in Red Lion Square, where he and Edward Burne-Jones in partnership had taken the house previously occupied by Rossetti, he went again to the Chiswick Press for the printing of his *Defence of Guenevere*. The get-up of this, his first book, suggests that of the magazine, and it is ornamented after much the same fashion. Nine busy years went by before his next book, the *Life and Death of Jason*, was printed by the Chiswick Press and published on commission by Bell & Daldy, as the magazine and *Guenevere* had been. There are no ornaments in the *Jason*.

Up to this time, 1867, Morris had paid for and looked after the printing of his own books, but *Jason* sold so well that Bell & Daldy offered him a fixed sum for the right to print a second, and afterwards a third, edition on their own account in the ordinary way. In the following year, F. S. Ellis, then in business as bookseller and publisher, took over the publishing of his books, and inaugurated the warm friendship which lasted until Morris's death. Henceforth, up to 1888, Morris took no more interest in the printing of his books than does the average author, and in no case do they rise above a respectable mediocrity.

Had conditions been more favourable, however, he would already have done something towards bringing about the improvement in book-printing eventually realized by the Kelmscott Press. An edition of the *Earthly Paradise*, then being written, was planned by him in 1866. This was to have been in double-column folio, full of pictures by Burne-Jones, and very much better got up and printed than any of the books then

current. More than forty blocks were engraved for this before the project was dropped, some thirty-five of them by Morris himself. Specimen pages were set up at the Chiswick Press; one of them in a Caslon old-face, and the other in the "Basel" type afterwards used for the *House of the Wolfings* in 1889, and to be described in that connexion. But in 1866 even the component poems of the *Earthly Paradise* had by no means assumed their definite shape, nor those to be included or laid aside been settled upon. Then, Morris & Co. had been founded in 1861, with a scant capital, mainly provided by Morris; and in 1865 the downfall of certain inherited investments had very greatly reduced Morris's income, forcing him to part with his famous Red House at Upton in Kent, as well as compelling him to put the greater part of his energies into building up Morris & Co. as a money-earning business.

About 1871 he showed that his interest in book-printing had not altogether died out, by projecting a finely-printed illustrated edition of *Love is Enough*. Nothing more was done, however, than designing and engraving some of the ornaments. Two initials and seven marginal decorations were designed and engraved by Morris, who also engraved a marginal decoration designed by Burne-Jones. A frontispiece designed by Burne-Jones remained uncut until 1897, when it was engraved by W. H. Hooper, and utilized on the last page of the Kelmscott Press edition of the poem.

Both schemes, that of 1866 and that of 1871, would appear to have been conceived and approached from the standpoint of ornament and illustration, with little or no real thought as to the typographical side of the matter. So far as he could recall in after years, it did not occur to Morris to go beyond the types, paper and presswork then available, unsatisfactory as he found these to be for his purpose, or to do otherwise than to drop the work altogether when he discovered that conditions were so strongly against him. Money lacked, if nothing else, for experiments made "on his own," and his working-time was fully taken up with Morris & Co. and the wares they produced, which entailed upon him the study and practice of an ever-increasing number of crafts. He took refuge in calligraphy and illumination, transcribing and ornamenting favourite poems or poems of his own at odd hours and on Sundays, either as

gifts to specially favoured friends or for sheer enjoyment of the work. One of his manuscripts, a *Rubaiyat* on vellum, is in the British Museum; another, on paper, containing translations from the Icelandic, is in the Fitzwilliam.

To wonder at his not being ready to do in 1871 what he did in 1891 is to ignore not only the many undertakings to which he already stood committed, but the immense and many-sided work done by him in the interval, as well as the vital fact that he was a learner to the end of his life, learning from actual working experience even more than from observation and wide reading as he went along. Quite naturally, he did not then possess the more assured knowledge, the wider vision and keener insight, the richer technical experience and masterly skill of eye and hand, that were his in 1891 as the result of untiring work in a score of differing fields. It was the time spent by him at the dye-vat and the drawing-board, the loom and the glass-furnace, in the printing-shed for chintzes or wallpapers, in the workshop of the cabinetmaker, at his work-table as calligrapher, designer, illuminator, draughtsman, wood-engraver, which prepared and enabled him to become the Master-Printer of 1891–1896.

That even so late as 1886 he felt no personal call towards printing, or, at any rate, took no very great concern in it, is clear from what happened when the printing of the *Commonweal* was under discussion by the Executive of the Socialist League in that year. Hitherto, the paper had been set up and printed "out," but was henceforth to be set up and made ready in its own office, going "out" only to be machined.

Less than three years later, Morris would certainly have had a good deal to say as to type and get-up and so on; but as things were, when Thomas Binning—who was to be foreman printer on the *Commonweal,* and later on to be father of the chapel at the Kelmscott Press—proposed that the paper be set in a "modern" type, Morris allowed the proposal to pass without a murmur as member of the Executive, nor did he complain of the choice in private. Indeed, from first to last, I cannot recall a single instance in which he interested himself in the printing of any pamphlet, leaflet, or anything else issued by the League; and the only ornaments used in League publications were due to Walter Crane. Even the decorative heading

of the *Commonweal*, attributed to Morris by Buxton Forman and others, was not his at all, having been designed and engraved by George F. Campfield, who presented the block to the League in token of sympathy and support.

Morris's attitude towards another proposal of Binning's in the course of the same discussion—to adopt the "new" or, as it was then called, "Americanized" spelling—was very different; and the fieriness of his opposition upon this point throws his acquiescence upon the other into striking relief. Because of my supporting Binning, though half-heartedly and through a juvenile desire to be up-to-date, I heard of my "damnable pedantry" in consenting to drop the u from "labour," thereby obscuring the history of the word, which came into English from the French, and not directly from the Latin; of my "unforgivable ignorance" in doing the like for "neighbour," where it was the o that was intrusive; and, finally, of my "incurable stupidity and blindness" in failing to recognize that the eye picks up a word as a recognizable whole, and that, so long as the word is recognizable as an entity, not confusable with another, exactitude of spelling is an academic formality.

Not that the superficial ferocity of expression is to be taken too seriously; for Morris's flare-ups were usually as passing and harmless as those of gunpowder lighted in the open; they were over and done with in an instant, leaving no slightest remnant of irritation or constraint upon his mind or his manner. Once, after a similar outburst had ruffled my callow dignity, he explained that "when a fellow damns your eyes, it only means, after all, that he disagrees with you for the moment!" Sometimes, of course, he was really and justifiably angry; but, even then, he was immediately repentant when the storm had passed. After an encounter with a well-known art-critic, during which he had said rather more than he meant, and far more strongly than he cared to remember, he self-accusingly commented that "a fellow ought always to be ashamed of losing his temper . . . especially with a hen-headed idiot like *that*!"

Not only with regard to his "rages," as they have been written of by the uninstructed, has he been a victim of the tendency towards repeating a story with verbal accuracy while conveying an entirely false impression of its meaning. Thus

Rossetti's remark that he "never gives a penny to a beggar" has been cited as proof that he was mean, though it was intended to imply the very opposite failing. Again, it is recorded that the talk having turned upon the laureateship, just after Tennyson's death, Morris insisted upon the then Marquis of Lorne as being the fittest man for the appointment; and this has been quoted in proof of his admiration for the poet instead of his contempt for the post. Those who were present can still chuckle over the riotous drollery with which he pictured himself as a flunkey, "sitting down in crimson plush breeches and white silk stockings to write birthday odes in honour of all the blooming little Guelphlings and Battenbergs that happen to come along!"

Returning to the *Commonweal*, his indifference with regard to its printing, or that of his own books between 1868 and 1888, must not be taken to mean that at any time in his life he was insensible to the charm of a well-written manuscript or a well-printed book. But for fully twenty years he seems to have taken for granted that book-printing as an art was dead, and, except for the evanescent project with regard to *Love is Enough* in 1870, to have experienced no personal call to revive it. In this connexion, the quantity and variety of the work that filled and overfilled his days must again be emphasized, as well as the fact that he never went outside of the day's work to look for a new technique to be studied. Stained glass, tiles, wallpapers, figured silks, printed cottons, carpets, embroideries, tapestries, furniture, were among but far from all the things he designed and wrought at with his own hands, because there was a need for his doing so; and each main craft led him into subsidiary or tributary crafts beyond naming, always through some workaday demand or difficulty, in some way to be met or overcome by him alone.

Add his productiveness as poet and prose writer, his ubiquity as lecturer for the causes that came near his heart, allow for an occasional rare day of comparative relaxation; and the wonder then is, not that printing came so late as 1888 within the scope of his activities, but that it ever came there at all.

That it ever did come there was almost entirely due to Emery Walker, an eager and lifelong student of typography, and one of Morris's most intimate friends from 1884 until the

end. That it should come when it did was determined by the holding of the first Arts and Crafts Exhibition. A few good examples of the best class of commercial printing were there shown; but, out of the long list of Morris's own works, not one was felt by him to be worthy of inclusion. Printing stood conspicuously alone among the arts and crafts which are concerned with daily life in a domestic interior as being unrepresented by any example of things "you know to be useful and believe to be beautiful," either produced by himself or under his direct influence. This was for him not only regrettable in itself, but in connexion with his own books a reproach.

Among the illustrated lectures delivered at the Exhibition was one on "Printing" by Emery Walker, which he talked over with Morris while preparing the slides for it. This entailed a careful examination of incunabula, of manuscripts that had been or might have been taken for models by the earlier printers, as well as later examples of what ought or ought not to have been done, and lengthy discussion of all the factors which tell for beauty or the reverse in a printed book.

November 15, 1888, then, the date of this lecture, may be taken as the first certain date in the history of the Kelmscott Press, as it was that on which Morris resolved upon designing and possessing a fount of his own. It is true that he had already, and more than once, during his talks with Walker, expressed a desire to "have a shot" at this, an intention "one of these days" to "see what can be done." But the desire now hardened into a definite purpose, and the intention into a determination to begin at once.

His one remaining doubt was upon the point of cost; as to whether he could afford the expense of making the experiment. At the time and until November 1890, he was finding several hundreds of pounds a year for the maintenance of the *Commonweal*, and had as yet no idea of selling any copies of the book or books to be printed, nor did that idea occur to him at all until it was forced upon him from the outside, as will be told in its place. The new project presented itself and appealed to him as an endeavour, to be made by him and at his own charge, to reattain a long-lost standard of craftsmanship in book-printing. Nor had he got so far as to think of having anything nearer to a press of his own than a composing-room, in which the type

friend, this is what I came out for to see: this many-gabled old house built by the simple country-folk of the long-past times, regardless of all the turmoil that was going on in cities and courts, is lovely still amidst all the beauty which these latter days have created; & I do not wonder at our friends tending it carefully and making much of it. It seems to me as if it had waited for these happy days, and held in it the gathered crumbs of happiness of the confused and turbulent past." ❡ She led me up close to the house, and laid her shapely sun-browned hand and arm on the lichened wall as if to embrace it, and cried out: "O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, & all that grows out of it, as this has done!" ❡ I could not answer her, or say a word. Her exultation and pleasure were so keen and exquisite, & her beauty, so delicate, yet so interfused with energy, expressed it so fully, that any added word would have been commonplace and futile. I dreaded lest the others should come in suddenly and break the spell she had cast about me; but we stood there a while by the corner of the big gable of the house, and no one came. I heard the merry voices some way off presently, & knew that they were going along the river to the great meadow on the other side of the house and garden. ❡ We drew back a little, & looked up at the house: the door and the windows were open to the fragrant sun-cured air; from the upper window-sills hung festoons of

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might be set up and imposed, the formes then going to Emery Walker's offices, at No. 16 Clifford's Inn, to be printed from. His one doubt was at an end when Walker had made or obtained a detailed estimate, and he found that he might hope to produce and enjoy a "decent-seeming" book, having enough copies for distribution among a few chosen friends, at the approximate cost of one copy of "a book worth looking at"—*i.e.* one of the finer incunabula—though the prices then fetched by such things were far from those to which they now run.

With Emery Walker's ungrudging aid, he immediately entered upon an intensive study of old models, and also of the technique of book-printing. For a deeper and readier grasp of the latter than can be reached by most men in a lifetime, he had been prepared by his long working experience in the printing of wallpapers and fabrics, while his friend and mentor was the best helper he could possibly have found in the world. Then, the penman's eye was his, as well as that of the designer and skilled craftsman. It need hardly be said that he went to the very root of the matter, giving as much assiduity and care to examining and considering the finest manuscripts and their handwriting as he gave to the incunabula and their types.

He had often bought such things in the past, but was not in the least a "collector," and had parted with most of them in order to find money for the *Commonweal* and for the Socialist movement as a whole, retaining no more than a favoured few, valued for their intrinsic interest as much as for their pleasantness to the eye. But he now began to buy both manuscripts and printed books for their beauty and technical perfection, their worth to him as good exemplars of those merits at which he intended to aim in his own work. During the remainder of his life, he formed in this way a splendid collection which unhappily was more or less dispersed after his death; not entirely so, for a great part of it passed into the Pierpont Morgan Library, now one of the public treasures of the City of New York.

No matter how enthusiastic or deeply stirred he might be, he was not the man to rush things when work was in question, or to enter upon an untried field without the most conscientious research and preparation. A full year of inquiry and experiment was to be spent before he addressed himself to the

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task of type-designing, to that of papermaking, and so on, deliberately and with due trust in his command of material and method. Work was too sacred in his eyes to be undertaken until it could be well done, done steadily, with hand and tools under full control and the end clearly in view.

For hasty work, or work done erratically on the plea that it was "inspirational," he had nothing but distrust and contempt. "Waiting for inspiration, rushing things in reliance upon inspiration, and all the rest of it, are a lazy man's habits. Get the bones of the work well into your head, and the tools well into your hand, and get on with your job, and the inspiration will come to you—if you're worth a tinker's damn as an artist, that is!" His definition of an artist being: "A chap who can keep his eye in the boat, and let his hand think for him." At another time he said: "It is only an apprentice or a botcher who has to think of the how, or worry about what one calls technique. The master of any trade can keep his eye on the work, what he wants to do, and leave his hand to get it out. He has it in his mind's eye clearly enough, but when it is finished, his hand has put a lot of things into it that his mind never thought of. That is exactly where inspiration comes in, if you want to call it so."

Unless I, in my turn, am to tell a true story in such a way as to suggest a lie, some comment is needed here. Morris's own work was wholly "inspirational" in the higher and better sense of the term. That is to say, none of it was ever done under compulsion or without the driving force of a creative impulse behind it; but, on the other hand, none of it was "inspirational" in the sense of being done by fits and starts with fallow intervals in between. Driving so many horses abreast as he did, he had never to wait in idleness for the spirit to move him toward creation in one medium or another. Should the verse-impulse be dormant for the moment, the prose-impulse or the design-impulse, or some other, was in control of his brain and hand. To put it more accurately, it might be said that one titanic driving-impulse to create beauty was unintermittently active, finding release through any one of many media that offered itself at any given instant, and the medium of the actual moment was not always—was rarely—consciously chosen. Thus it seemed to him as though his creations "growed," and

if he ever took pride in them at all, it was rather in the head-and-hand work which gave them form than in the deeper and almost unfelt effort which gave them substance. It was not in him, therefore, to appreciate and allow for the position of a "nothing-but"—the poet who is poet only, or the painter who is helpless at aught but painting—who must perforce either wait in idle sterility for the one impulse to return, or toilingly turn out work that were better left undone, or done for practice and then destroyed.

By way of marking the time and pains that Morris gave to a project, once he had formulated it and put his hand to the plough, take the following dates:

November 1888. Emery Walker's lecture.
December 1889. Type-designing begun.
December 1890. Last punches of "Golden" type cut.
January   1891. Trial-page pulled of *Glittering Plain*.

Allowance has to be made, of course, for the fact that he gave neither the whole of any day nor any fixed part of all his days to the new undertaking, which was rather the relaxation of leisure hours than the business to which he must see. Not one of his usual occupations was put aside, nor did his fertility in other directions perceptibly slacken. "Relaxation" and "leisure," however, are distinctly relative terms when used in connexion with him; for he found rest in change of work, and held that he was idling while doing that which would have exhausted any other man I have ever known.

To his methods of work I shall have to return, but this much may be said here: that "the man in the backshop," to use his own phrase, or "the subconscious mind" in the cant of to-day, was for ever engaged upon the next job, that visibly in hand having been thought over and matured while another or others were exteriorizing themselves in tangible shape. "I have an artichoke mind," he said once; "no sooner do I pull off a leaf than there's another waiting to be pulled." Wendell Holmes has touched somewhere upon the parallel currents of consciousness, and what they carry at a particular time. In Morris's case, every one of these currents was a creative stream, each of them busy about its own concerns and untroubled by the others. Each came to the surface at its own due time, and had but to be relieved of its rich burden; this being no sooner drawn, written,

or otherwise brought into concrete existence, than it was done with and forgotten.

"I'm a tidyminded man," he urged in his own defence when *Poems by the Way* was going through the press, and he could render little or no help towards getting its contents together. "Tidymindedness," as he called it, went the length of throwing off all thought of work that had once been finished, and we had to rely upon others for the retrieving of his fugitive poems —even for identifying more than one. It is more than probable that this "tidymindedness" had a good deal to do with the indifference he for so long displayed to the printing of his works; so soon as the manuscripts had been completed and handed over, his interest in them waned, if it did not vanish. In fact, work once done was done with to such an extent that it must stand or fall on its merits. When the *Earthly Paradise* was being re-set for the double-columned single-volume edition, he saw to the correction of misprints and amended one or two faulty rhymes, but further than this he would not go.

"A man's hand will tell you more about him, and more truly, than his tongue or that of anybody else can. Unless you know his work, you won't learn much by listening to him—and less yet by reading about him." In order to do my best, however, toward the understanding of Morris and his achievement, even on the part of those who are as yet unfamiliar with his work— with a hope, also, of sending these to search for and study it— I shall roughly survey the history and condition of book-printing as it was before he took it up, sketch his record and methods of work as artist and craftsman up to that point, deal with the course of training through which he put himself, his preparations to commence printer, tell about the Kelmscott Press and the books it produced, and then try to estimate its enduring influence upon the art of printing.

II

PRINTING IN 1888

I⊤ is all the more necessary to outline the history of book-printing as Morris knew it, and to approximate the state in which he found it, because of the harm, no less than the good, that has been wrought in the interval. What has been and is being achieved for the improvement of printing, conscientiously and with conscious effort—self-conscious only too often—is continuously imperilled by its very conscientiousness, which tells nowadays toward science rather than art, as well as by the continual growth and increased acceptance of mechanism, and the inevitable toleration of ugliness which comes of that, even to those who are alert for beauty. Alike as readers, printers and letter-designers, we suffer from the typewriter, mechanical compositor and their concomitants—to say nothing of the unloveliness of our usual surroundings—which set up in us a subconscious barrier against the beauty we consciously seek.

Morris condemned the typewriter for creative work; it was "all right for journalism and the like; there's nothing to be said for that! For hastily written copy, which doesn't matter anyway, it may be desirable, or for a chap who can't write clearly—I daresay the *Commonweal* compositors would be glad enough were Blank to go in for one!—but it's out of place in imaginative work or work that's meant to be permanent. Anything that gets between a man's hand and his work, you see, is more or less bad for him. There's a pleasant feel in the paper under one's hand and the pen between one's fingers that has its own part in the work done. . . . I always write with a quill because it's fuller in the hand for its weight, and carries ink better—good ink—than a steel pen. . . . I don't like the typewriter or

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the pneumatic brush—that thing for blowing ink on to the paper—because they come between the hand and its work, as I've said, and again because they make things too easy. The minute you make the executive part of the work too easy, the less thought there is in the result. And you can't have art without resistance in the material. No! The very slowness with which the pen or the brush moves over the paper, or the graver goes through the wood, has its value. And it seems to me, too, that with a machine one's mind would be apt to be taken off the work at whiles by the machine sticking or what not."

Never having used a typewriter himself, and not knowing anyone who habitually did so then, he could not foresee a further evil which comes of it. A man, trained in his youth to the pen, but for whom the machine is now so familiar that he seems to think into it without pause or hesitation, has in great part lost that sense of restraint which made for measure and rhythm in what he writes, but may in fancy, perhaps, recapture the sensuous pleasure in the act of writing which once was his. Imagination may give him the feel of the pen in his fingers, the glide of his hand upon the paper, and the growth of words under his eye, while his periods turned themselves upon the recurrent but ever-varying curves and lines of the letters he shaped. But what, even in fancy, he cannot recapture is the unhesitating certainty with which he could once judge type, telling the merits or failings of a letter or discriminating between allied faces, detect a strayed or faulty letter without effort or strained care, or pull up at a "hound's tooth" which is wellnigh invisible to him now. He has paid for his gain of speed and acceptability to editors with a narcotization of his eye, a diminished power of swift discrimination, an inurement to the distortion of letters in order that m and l may go upon the same-sized body and strike into the same space, to a rigidity of spacing which disfigures a page with "rivers," and all the other concessions to mechanical uniformity. Only by days passed in the transcription by hand of good models, endeavouring as he goes along to comprehend the hows and whys of their unadorned comeliness, can he hope in any measure to regain his old skill.

A printer suffers in a similar way and to an even greater degree. Continual setting from typewritten copy, even though he set by hand, has its natural effect, and his estate is worsened

if he set by linotype, having no control over spacing. Add that
the type he sets has too often been compressed for the sake of
money-saving or is mannered for the sake of "difference"; that
punctuation has been over-simplified for the minimizing of
"sorts"; that the only models he has ever seen, apart from the
current printing of to-day, are, on the average, those that have
been thrust under his uninterested nose at a craft-school or
museum, or been reduced or smoothed into unrecognizability
in his trade-paper; and one can but pity his lot.

Then, the craze for "time-saving"—in order, it would really
appear, to have time to kill—has had its inevitable effect; its
universal effect, for all crafts and all products have suffered
alike. Brickmaking, for example, has deteriorated no less than
the making of books. Old-time bricks and tiles were made of
heavy clay, long exposed and well tempered, beaten by hand
into the moulds and thus made hard and homogeneous
throughout. Nowadays, the lightest obtainable clay is used
without weathering or tempering, hastily squeezed into shape
by machine, and burned without "waste of time." Though
the "improved" bricks and tiles may be more accurately shaped
and have an external appearance of better finish, there are
hidden inequalities of density, setting up strains and stresses
which make for weakness and lack of durability, wholly un-
known before "science" took a hand in their manufacture and
more than doubled their ultimate cost in seeking immediate
profit. The same story might be told of wood, rubber, silk,
and half a hundred other products, robbed of strength and
durability by commercialized "science."

Nor is the average reader likely—less likely still to be quali-
fied—to call the printer to account. Apart from the typed
letters to which he is accustomed in business, his taste has been
vitiated by the daily reading of books, newspapers and maga-
zines, printed in a variety of disagreeing types, in which the lines
have been spaced at a stroke, so that the spaces between words
are mechanically equal and therefore differ widely to the eye,
while the column or page is bestreaked by rivers, greyed by
skinniness of type and poorness of ink, every defect being em-
phasized by the glare due to wide leading and glazed paper.

Thus, at least as much as in Morris's day, the critical taste
of the average printer is being deadened, where not killed, and

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that of the reader falsified where not altogether destroyed, by an unconsciously cultivated insensitiveness to the little things that in sum are beauty; their absence entailing its opposite, no matter how perfected and up-to-date the machinery and the mechanical skill involved may be. And it must be taken for a moot point as to whether and how far a designer of type, however well-intentioned, learned and finely inspired, can altogether escape the fate that has befallen printer and reader, keeping his eye clear and his taste undefiled in a time that, at its best, is one of transition and revolt—not always intelligent —oscillating between dilettantism on the one hand and philistinism on the other.

In printing, we are mercifully preserved from cubism and the like by the nature of things, though the *art nouveau* had its Grasset; but, on the other hand, by the nature of things, the designer of type is denied a resource which is open to the painter or sculptor; who, if he will, may return to nature at any time, finding innumerable models—provided fresh and fresh, as it were—from which to take example, and by means of which to restore the truth and strength of his eye. It is true that the type-designer may also go to nature in order to refresh his jaded sense of colour and form, whet the dulled edge of his discernment, and renew his inborn sense of taste. But nature offers him no model.

There is no absolute standard of perfection in type-design to which he may refer, no ready-made method or code of rules by which he may determine the "fashion" of his letter. For this he is thrown back upon his own eye, with what help he may get from studying the successes and failures of his predecessors. Their success or their failure he can only judge by the legibility and beauty of the *books* they have left him, and by those qualities in those books alone, and by neither the show of type on a specimen-sheet nor its misleading look in a reproduction.

From the Renaissance onwards, many attempts have been made to set up a standard and codify a set of rules through scientific research and mathematical methods, but Morris very strongly held that all such attempts were foredoomed to failure; though those of the Italian writing-masters, who tried to ascertain and reduce to precept the *practice* of their exemplars, "had something to say for themselves."

I any the more: though it would indeed be hard if there were nothing else in the world, no wonders, no terrors, no unspeakable beauties. Yet when we think what a small part of the world's history, past, present, & to come, is this land we live in, and how much smaller still in the history of the arts, & yet how our forefathers clung to it, and with what care and

not see how these can be better spent than in making life cheerful & honourable for others and for ourselves; and the gain of good life to the country at large that would result from men seriously setting about the bettering of the decency of our big towns would be priceless, even if nothing specially good befell the arts in consequence: I do not know that it would; but I should begin to think matters hopeful if men turned their attention to such things, and I repeat that, unless they do so, we can scarcely even begin with any hope our endeavours for the bettering of the Arts. (from the lecture called The Lesser Arts, in Hopes and Fears for Art, by William Morris, pages 22 and 33.)

While Morris was at work upon printing, Talbot Baines Reed formulated a tentative statement, based upon the researches and experiments of Dr. Javal and other continental scientists, which met with his approval, as well as that of another friend of his, the well-known oculist, William Lang: 1. That the eye, after all, is the sovereign judge of form. 2. That, in reading, the eye travels horizontally along a perfectly straight line, lying slightly below the top of the ordinary letters. So that the width of a letter is of more consequence than its height, and the upper half of it than the lower. 3. That, in reading, the eye does not take in letters, but words or groups of words. 4. That the type which by its regularity of alignment, its due balance between black and white, its absence of dazzling contrasts between thick and thin, by its simplicity and unobtrusiveness, lends itself most readily to this rapid and comprehensive action of the eye, is the most legible. 5. That such type is, on the whole, the most beautiful.

In accepting this as a summary outline of the matter, with strong reservations as to Nos. 4 and 5, Morris laid particular stress upon the first article—that the eye, after all, is the sovereign judge of form—and as a corollary insisted upon the need of pursuing the inquiry into periods before the invention of printing.

Inasmuch as the hand of the penman is free to follow the dictates of his eye, and is freest when unhampered by theory or dominated by the demand of a machine-ridden market, it stands to reason that there was more likelihood of making letters legible and beautiful when books were hand-written than at any later time. When hand and eye are in consonance, the hand responds—automatically, it might almost be said— to a desire for pleasure on the part of the eye. The odds are therefore in favour of the pre-mechanistic manuscript as opposed to the printed book, even at its best, when choosing an object of study with a view to disengaging the factors of legibility and beauty.

It need hardly be said that "legibility" and "beauty," for Morris, meant something other than easy readability for the mass of readers, whose literary appetite is met by the report of a murder or a written-to-sell short-story, or the gingerbread sham-beauty which entices those whose artistic demands are

satisfied by the movies or a "kiss-me" lithograph. Nor did the meaning he gave the words coincide with that which is given them by the slightly more cultivated who yet are victims of the toleration of ugliness, now so common in our machine-made world.

These qualities, as he thought of them, he found in the work of the earlier printers, and yet more completely in that of the scribes, their predecessors and exemplars; seeing them, as he did, with eyes that had been disciplined by long years of scrutinizing and rendering all kinds of natural form in many kinds of material. If he had been accused of surrendering to convention in so thinking and acting, he would very cheerfully have pleaded guilty to the charge, and would then have carried the war into the enemy's country by demonstrating that human work in any field is and must be entirely governed from first to last by "convention"—that is, by *convenience* in the higher and wider sense of the word. That in the particular field with which we are here concerned, the making and reading of books, the written or printed word is no more than a conventional symbol, which by general agreement or *convention* is intended to suggest rather than convey a sound; which sound in its turn is no more than a conventional symbol, intended to evoke an idea that it cannot represent. That, in short, as printers, not to say as human beings, we are very strictly confined to a world of convention. That the opposite of convention is anarchy and a welter of whimsies, and that the real question lies between a convention that has been found convenient during a long period of working convenience, and one that has been or may be set up to accord with or excuse the evanescent needs or desires of a passing epoch. And he would have quoted, as I have heard him quote, César Dally's retort upon Viollet-le-Duc: "M. Viollet-le-Duc is a very great man; but, for my part, I prefer to appeal to history."

When books were multiplied by hand, each successive copy of a fine manuscript was, or tended to be, an experiment in the direction of greater legibility and beauty—inevitably so, for the reasons that have already been given. The *conventions* arrived at were transmitted by precept and example, *i.e.* by *tradition* and *custom*; tradition, which reached back into the night of time, was continuously being enriched, while custom was

continuously being modified, as the outcome of practical working experience, down to the Renaissance. This applies to all the arts and crafts without exception. There were of course many manuscripts, of lesson-books or other books of utility, that were turned out as rapidly as possible, without thought of beauty or touch of decoration; but even for these, tradition held, and at their very worst they are immeasurably above the eye-degrading school-books and utility-books of our own time. For the better class of work there was always a demand, therefore a supply, and there are hundreds of manuscripts in existence that go near to perfection; few libraries of note are now without examples to which reference may profitably be made by a student. The unornamented and less-valued manuscripts have perished and are perishing day by day. Morris once gave me some leaves out of one of these latter, rescued from a maker of children's tambourines—together with some forcible advice as to my handwriting—which leave nothing to be desired in the direction of unadorned grace.

Printing—"that most noble of the Mechanick Arts, being that which to Letters and Science hath given the Precision and Durability of the printed Page"—was invented in response to a growing demand for speed; as was the steam-engine two hundred years later. It came at an opportune moment for the world in general, but at a fatal one for its own continued integrity as an art. Indeed, as an art, printing declined in an inverse ratio to its rise as an industry; largely because of the loss of tradition and the debasement of the general level of taste in "that period of blight which was introduced by the so-called Renaissance," when men entered upon "a singularly stupid and brutal phase of that rhetorical and academic art which, in all matters of ornament, has held Europe captive ever since. . . . A time of so much and such varied hope that people call it the time of the New Birth; as far as the arts are concerned, I deny it that title; rather it seems to me that the great men who lived and glorified the practice of art in those days were the fruit of the old, not the seed of the new order of things."

The press being already in existence, the invention was a double one: that of movable metal types, and that of printer's ink; this latter an adaptation of oil-paint, itself but recently

invented. And behind the invention lay the idea of reproducing manuscripts, with greater facility and speed than could be made possible with the pen, but with the utmost achievable fidelity of adaptation. It may be only a legend that the first printed books were offered and bought for manuscripts, and, in any case, the deception could not long have been maintained; but the first intention undoubtedly was to adapt the work of the pen. It may be noted, in passing, that as a consequence the first great printed book remained the best printed book until the Kelmscott Chaucer came to rival it.

Naturally, the first printers took the best manuscripts within reach as their models, not only in general but in particular, not only as wholes but in detail. That is to say, not only were their founts designed to resemble the handwriting of chosen manuscripts, but each letter in a fount was closely copied from the most attractive out of many variants. If there were, as there were, a dozen or a score or more m's or d's or y's on a page, each varying slightly from all the others, as they must, the type-designer took that which satisfied his penman's eye the more fully for model; feeling free, at the same time, to adapt it as might be needed to his new methods. And in taking over the manner and semblance of a manuscript, he took over the tradition that went along with it.

For the Roman letter, all out the more important in our western world, Nicholas Jenson the Frenchman, working at Venice, though not absolutely the first was the greatest of the pioneers. He selected the best letters from the best work of his contemporaries among the Italian scribes—who had themselves not so long before returned upon the noble simplicity of an earlier day—and brought them triumphantly into line with the requirements of typography. His characters are those of a highly trained penman and man of taste, well rounded within a square, at once dignified and clear. There is the individuality of an artist in them, without in any way detracting from their fidelity to tradition or their unaffected severity. Their alignment is even, but not baldly neat; descenders and ascenders are gracefully in proportion to the ordinary letters; and the counter or inside white is as open as it may well be without conveying a suggestion of weakness. All serifs are right-angled, which

gives them durability, and adds a spirited finishing touch to the letter.

Aldus followed Jenson, and improved upon his roman in some ways, though the Aldine Greek type is poor, being taken from the debased Greek handwriting of his time; but the manuscript influence was on the wane, and the medieval tradition, "unbroken since the very first beginnings of art upon this planet," was perceptibly dying. Good as the Aldine roman might be, its designer's hand had not been subdued to the pen, and it betrays the first frosty touch of academicism upon his mind. Looking back, we see that this was only what might have been expected; for, while the "study of Greek literature at first hand" aided the intellectual development of cultivated men, yet "since they did but half understand its spirit, [it] was warping their minds into fresh error." They "thought they saw a perfection of art which to their minds was different in kind . . . from the ruder suggestive art of their fathers; this perfection they were anxious to imitate, this alone seemed to be art to them; the rest was childishness." But "when the great masters of the Renaissance were gone, they who, stung by the desire of doing something new, turned their mighty hands to the work of destroying the last remains of living popular art, putting in its place for a while the results of their own wonderful individuality—when these great men were dead, and lesser men . . . were masquerading in their garments, then at last it was seen what the so-called New Birth really was; then we could see that it was the fever of the strong man yearning to accomplish something before his death, not the simple hope of the child, who has long years of life and growth before him."

Hastened by the segregation of the "fine" from the "domestic" arts, those that are also crafts, their divorce from architecture, and the growing division between men of thought and men of action, between head-men and hand-men—which has now been carried so far that plans and designs are made by men who could not possibly carry them out, and carried out by men who cannot in the least understand or appreciate them—the arts "in these latter days of the Renaissance . . . took the downward road with terrible swiftness, and tumbled down at the bottom of the hill, where, as if bewitched, they lay long in great content."

Geoffroy Tory, professor of philosophy turned printer's reader—which meant no loss of prestige or status in those days as it does in these, when the "knowing noodles," as Morris termed them, keep apart from useful men—and theorist above all things, tried to reduce lettering to an exact science, and the designing of type to a mathematical system. He was one of those who thought they saw a perfection of art that was different in kind from the ruder art of their fathers, and was stung by the desire of doing something new. Far-fetched and ill-founded as were his conclusions, they inspired a greater man than he, his pupil, Claude Garamond, when producing that which was to rank above all others as the model type of modern Europe.

To deny Garamond's merit would be ridiculous, or to belittle the graceful, if academic, proportioning of his letter; of this, the thins are in definite and pleasing relation to the thicks, while its triangled serifs are as well calculated as Jenson's to finish off a character with spirit, and to retain their sharp strength under usage. A great advance in punchcutting is marked by the keen arrises of its face, and the justification of the fount as a whole goes far to show that letterfounding, no less than punchcutting, was coming near to technical perfection. When so much has been said, however, one is compelled to set against Garamond's name that, in connexion with printing, he was the last and most fatal of the "strong men yearning," rather the "fruit of the old" than the "seed of the new"; that his was the proudest and the final repudiation of that immemorial heritage of tradition that the earlier printers had taken over from "the fathers and famous men that begat them."

It is characteristic of the Renaissance that Garamond, like his master, was attracted as by an irresistible tropism to the academic leaden age of Rome rather than to the virile period of growth which had preceded it. Lettering was the one indigenous art of Rome, the single one undominated by Greek precedent, and was akin therefore to the crafts which were more particularly Roman in maintaining its fertility and freedom for some time after all else had been reduced to rule and regulated from above. The first year of our epoch may roughly be taken as marking its point of culmination; thenceforward —though, as has been said, it held out longer than most, especi-

ally in outlying parts of the Empire—it shared with all the other arts in the steadily deadening effect of the replacement of the free craftsman by slave labour. The earliest examples we have are inscriptions on stone, stiffly archaic; but pen-writing seems to have come in about 300 B.C., most probably from the East, and exerted a marked influence, even upon monumental inscriptions.

"In pen-written characters," as W. R. Lethaby says in *Londinium*, "the thick and thin strokes make themselves without there being any design in the matter. It seems equally natural in large clear writing to finish off the strokes with a thin touch of the pen to sharpen the forms. This procedure was taken over so exactly into inscriptions cut on stone that, for the most part, it seems these must first have been written on the stone with an implement like a wide brush and cut in afterwards by a mason. The chisel, like the pen, is thin and wide, and thus perfectly fitted to develop the habit of the pen. ... Whoever wishes to design inscriptions must begin on the writing basis ... take up the practice of writing capital and small letters with single strokes of the pen, not 'touching up' or 'painting' the letters, and, above all, not 'designing' them with high-waisted bars, swollen loops, little-headed S curves, and other horrors of ignorance and vulgarity, but learning once for all a central standard style. ... It is difficult to draw out any general rules of form and spacing; generally O and C were very round in form, N of square proportions, and M wider than a square. The round letters were usually thickened, not where the curves would touch vertical tangents, but a little under and over, just as is natural in writing the letters. The loops of D and R do not become horizontal at top and bottom, but bend freely. A, N and M usually have square terminations at the upper angles." Examples of rapid cursive writing on bricks and tiles, written while the clay was yet soft and unburnt, give the origin of our lower-case letters.

Later on, as free labour was gradually killed out by slave-labour, for which "designs" must be provided that could be blindly followed and mechanically executed, all those virile qualities which derived from the free pen or chisel in the hand of a free craftsman gave way before an encroaching tide of academic formalism. The "strong men" of the Renaissance,
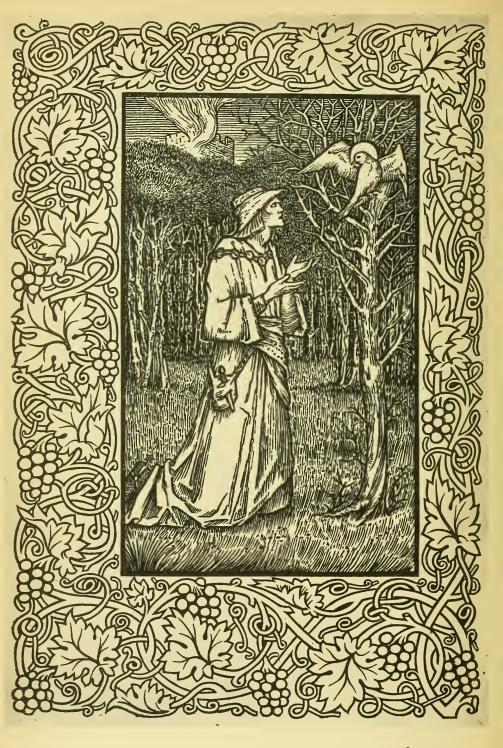
who were the unwitting pioneers of a slave-epoch in all but the individualistic arts, inevitably turned to the slave-time precedents, and bent their energies to the academizing of these to a higher degree—or a lower. And again, quite naturally, the designer of to-day, a day of dehumanized machine industry, served by men who are nominally freemen in all but their work, too frequently follows the Renaissance masters in their following rule-ridden precedents instead of going behind them to the age of gold. It is not merely that his mind, steeped in the slave-atmosphere, is attuned to the leaden age, but that he finds it easier to shape himself upon the academic imitators of leaden Rome than upon the originals these last imitated, and fell short of. If a man has an innate preference for the Classic, surely there is no reason why he should not seek inspiration in the firm yet free lettering of the best period, and do fine work as a result! But, even then, he would be well advised to give at least an equal attention to the later Middle Age, when the *book* had been fully evolved, and lettering subdued to the needs of the book instead of those merely of the monument.

It has been said of Garamond that he emancipated the art of printing from the shackles of a dead past, though it is by no means easy to find the mark of those shackles, or any others, upon the extraordinarily varied and living work of those who went before him. Nor can it be claimed that any of his own successors improved upon or equalled him, as they must inevitably have done had he actually freed their feet from any impediment, or pointed the way to higher things. With Garamond, as a matter of historic fact, easily verified by any one who has eyes to see, ended the last faint lingering influence upon printing of that orally transmitted craft-knowledge, that rich heritage of tradition which had been accumulating "since the very first beginnings of art upon this planet." And if shackles come into the matter at all, he rather aided the imposition of new than struck away any old ones.

Garamond, indeed, stands upon the verge of that Valley of the Shadow of Death into which all the arts were to descend, and his own type was very soon tinkered with to bring it into accord with a lowering taste, on the way down to the corruption of that "epoch of piggery and periwiggery," the "vile Pompadour period." "The fine arts, which had in the end of

FROM THE ENGRAVED TITLE PAGE FOR SYR YSAMBRACE 1897

Border by William Morris.   Picture by Sir E. Burne-Jones.   Engraved on wood by W. H. Hooper

the 16th century descended from the expression of the people's faith and aspirations into that of the fancy, ingenuity and whim of gifted individuals, fell lower still, dragging the domestic or applied arts in their train. They lost every atom of beauty and dignity, and retained little even of the ingenuity of the earlier Renaissance," while tradition had still a fading life in it, becoming "mere expensive and pretentious though carefully finished upholstery, mere adjuncts of pomp and state, the expression of the insolence of riches and the complacency of respectability."

In the earlier printed books, as in the manuscripts upon which they followed, a reciprocal harmony between the thicks and thins of the lettering and those of the black-and-white illustrations or decorations—which may, as in Roman days, have been undesignedly arrived at through the use of the pen when drawing for both—had been maintained as a tradition, if not for its own sake. Under the new dispensation, this harmony disappeared, and the utmost fertility of invention and mechanical skill was devoted to bringing disparate processes to bear upon book-production, till an expensive book became rather a forced assemblage of quarrelsome elements than an organic whole, was "bedizened rather than ornamented," while the type itself lost its own inner agreement, and in the end, by Bodoni and Didot, its thins were thinned until they were skinnily mean, and its thicks thickened until they were potbellied.

If this were the fate of printing as an art, as the "expression of the insolence of riches," its degradation as a trade went naturally and inevitably further; for "the complacency of respectability" was but a poor safeguard against the growth of commercialism. A stand was made for a time, here and there, as by the Elzevirs, who followed Garamond as their exemplar but lowered the standard he had set, and notably by William Caslon, who commenced founder in 1720—the year, by the way, in which Samuel Richardson commenced printer—taking his letter from among the best of the Elzevirs, but giving it a little more solidity than they did, a hint of the manner of about a hundred years before.

Caslon's type has more than a tinge of "the complacency of respectability," but is thoroughly British in being a commonsense compromise between the academic weakness and the

clumsy vulgarity which characterized the reigning types of his time. It is regular, bold and clear; its thins are of a commendable thickness, while its thicks have none of the coarseness prevalent among its Dutch competitors. It is well and truly justified, each letter being designed and cut as one of an alphabet, every member of which must range and harmonize with all the others. Even when there is a perceptible weakness in one letter—*e.g.* the lower-case s, always the most difficult letter in a Roman fount—when examined in isolation, that weakness can hardly be detected when the letter appears in combination with others on a page. This attribute of good ranging is woefully to seek in many of the founts due to his immediate predecessors, contemporaries and successors, and is only too often lacking in those of these days, even in some of the most able and conscientious efforts of good men.

Caslon did not only look after the relation of letter to letter in a fount, but was careful to preserve an harmonious relation throughout the whole series of which that fount was a part, so that a printer might be able to use two or more sizes of his type upon a job, and be sure of the same fashion and quality from one end of it to the other. This is not quite so easily managed as might be thought, and its achievement marks out Caslon as something of an artist. A working series of Roman founts that will cheerfully go together is not to be got by designing a letter, of whatever merit, and reducing or enlarging it with mathematical exactitude or by mechanical means. When reducing from a larger size to a smaller, for example, though the width of the letter should be in strict proportion, the length of the descenders and height of the ascenders must be relatively increased, while the thickness of the thicks, compared with that of the thins and the serifs, must also be greater. But there is no rule in the matter beyond the rule of thumb: "the eye, after all, is the sovereign judge of form."

As Garamond stands upon the brink of the pit into which printing descended, in company with all the arts, so do Bodoni and Didot stand at its bottom, with Baskerville near to them. Over-thinning the thins and over-thickening the thicks of their letter, at the cost of making their types too delicate for wear, leading heavily, and printing in glossy ink upon paper of a polished smoothness, they obtained a seductively delusive

appearance of luxury that even yet appeals to the depraved in taste, but which is tiring to the eye and repulsive to the lover of a quietly dignified page.

Until the eighteen-twenties there was little or no improvement. William Pickering (1821–1831) began to publish the famous "Diamond Classics," reprints inspired by the productions of Aldus, whose mark he adopted, adding the legend: *Aldi Discip. Anglus.* These were at first printed by Corrall, of whom nothing more than this would appear to be known, and later by Charles Whittingham I. The first Whittingham's work marked a very distinct advance upon anything then being done, or that had been done for many years, but was by no means equal to that of his more celebrated nephew. In 1829 began the long intimacy between Pickering and Charles Whittingham II. to which the latter was indebted for so much of his taste and ambition as a book-printer. Under Pickering's influence, Charles Whittingham II. raised the Chiswick Press to a pitch of efficiency and a command of material which placed it in the forefront of British book-printing: a position which, under Whittingham's able and enterprising successors, it held for many years.

Whether due to the example of the Chiswick Press or no, there was a general advance in British book-printing, slight but unmistakable, during the succeeding years, one sign of which was an increasing use of Caslon's letter ("old-face") and its adaptations ("old-style"). Apart from this, however, progress went in the direction of a smug hardness and uninteresting mediocrity, as in the case of Didot's disciples, French or Scotch, to the last-named being due the "new-face," which has unhappily come to be the accepted letter for scientific works and works of utility. Alongside of these developments went the introduction and spread of "ornamental" or "fancy" types.

Until the latter half of the 18th century, "ornamental" or "fancy" types were practically unknown. In earlier days, of course, the over-florid yet handsome *Teuerdank* letter had been designed and used for the honour and glory of Maximilian I., but this can hardly be counted in, and—if only because of its excessive employment of kerned letters—found few imitators. Excepting for "bloomers" or decorated initials, fleurons and vignettes, the three standard letters—roman, italic

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and black—were virtually untampered with before about what may be called the Bodoni epoch. But about the time when Bodoni was wreaking his wicked will upon body-type, sporadic attempts began to be made at "variety" upon French and far more frequently upon German titlepages, and in Germany now and then throughout whole volumes. At first, the innovation rarely went further than the addition of a shaded line outside the solid face of a roman or italic letter, or a further touch of eccentricity or spikiness to the *fraktur*. But it was not long before the solid line of a roman began to be shaded, beaded, rusticated, or bedevilled in some other way—*e.g.* to give the letter an appearance of being in intaglio or in relief—or the letter itself to be distorted into a tomfool imitation of copperplate or even of needlework.

When once the time-honoured form of the letter had begun to be meddled with, the dykes were down in earnest, and the movement speedily transgressed the bounds of sanity. Newfangled founts, in which the letter leant this way or that, was wiry to the limit or flowery to the extreme, lengthily drawn out or absurdly squat, curlicued or brokenbacked—one of them appropriately advertised as "chaos-type"—were poured into the market until 1888 and beyond; many of them by French or British founders, but most of them by the more versatile and unrestrainedly inventive distortionists of Germany and America.

Not all of these innovations, it must be allowed, were merely perverse. A few showed signs of a real, if misguided, striving after better things, gleams of what, under other conditions, might have been good taste. But the bulk of them were irredeemable monstrosities, wearisome "novelties" of the baser sort, catchpenny attempts at being "different," intended before all else to tickle the jaded palate of an undiscriminating public. They were mainly made use of in "job" printing, for handbills or the like, or in advertisements, as a few of them still are, but many of them found their way into book-printing by way of titlepages, dropped heads, and so on. Those printers who, like C. T. Jacobi in Great Britain or Theodore de Vinne in America, resisted or did not feel the temptation to crowd their titlepages, and sometimes their pages, with a mixture of heteroclite sizes and faces, often adding to the effect with

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rococo or fretsaw "ornaments," might be numbered on the fingers of one hand.

Kegan Paul, writing of "The Production and Life of Books" in 1883, said that "there could scarcely be a better thing for the artistic future of books than that which might be done by some master of decorative art, like Mr. William Morris, and some great firm of typefounders in conjunction, would they design and produce some new types for our choicer printed books." This wish was now on the road to something more than fulfilment; for Morris did not merely design some new types but re-discovered, studied and practised the *making of books* in all its branches and from the root up.

III

MORRIS IN 1888

Morris came to printing as an all-round craftsman, already a conqueror in many fields. Important as is the place he fills in the history of printing, printing was but one of his activities, as has been seen, and the latest of them at that. This not only tells for his own greatness, but goes far towards explaining his achievement as type-designer, decorator, practical printer, and all-round maker of beautiful books, standing second to none of his predecessors and far above all who have yet followed him.

For years past, when confronted with a new trade and compelled to acquire a new technique, his invariable experience had been that he must go back to the days before machinery in order to find the best models, and also the best methods by which he might hope to equal these. It was this experience that now sent him to manuscripts and incunabula for his models, and the earlier printers for his methods. At the same time, as will duly appear, he neglected to learn nothing that his own day could offer him.

For his own writings in printed form, he had for a long time been more or less content with a passable adequacy. In this he was helped by his "tidymindedness," to which reference has been made; once they had left his hand, his poems or stories interested him no longer; they had, as it were, ceased to be his, and what became of them was not his business. But, as always, once aroused to a real need, he resolutely set himself to the task of meeting it; meeting it as a practical craftsman, and not as an *a priori* theorist.

He was, by nature, neither an innovator nor a reactionary; that which was old was not necessarily good in his eyes, nor

that which was new to be acclaimed or condemned on the score of its newness. It invariably was the *work* which counted, and counted for its inherent worth; not its age or the name of the man who had wrought it. Book, picture, tapestry, or piece of furniture, the *work* stood or fell upon its own merits, without the least regard to the period or the person that had produced it. He protested, for example, against "restoration" of ancient buildings because "the art of that time was the outcome of the life of that time," and therefore could not be re-supplied or amended; because "the imitative art of to-day is not and cannot be the same thing as ancient art, and cannot replace it"; because ancient buildings "are documents of a wholly past condition of things, documents which to alter or correct is, in fact, to falsify and render worthless." But never, never once, because they were *old*. In the same way, and to the same degree, modern work was denounced where and when it was bad, praised where and when it was good; but neither the one nor the other because it was *new*. Thus also with methods of work; that which aided him or guided him in doing the work before him was good, be it new or old; that which hampered him or debased the work was bad: he had no other criterion. He has been accused by one school of doctrinaires of being a reckless utopian, by another of being a hidebound believer in a dead epoch, the truth being that he offended both by demanding that their doctrines be brought to the test of working practice, and by upholding long-continued everyday experience as the ultimate authority.

In turning to a new kind of work, its attraction for him also lay in the need for or worth of the work in itself, and not at all in any desire for a change. He is frequently spoken of as "versatile," but in so far as the word is taken to imply a restless or causeless veering from one occupation to another, or to convey the faintest hint of instability or caprice, it is the least fitting of all possible terms; only in its derivative sense of manysidedness, and the ability to take up a new craft or trade at call, is it applicable. For an additional art or craft was always accepted rather than sought by him; some workaday difficulty that he alone could overcome, or a fresh demand that he alone could meet, consistently lay behind each extension of his activities. Thus the call for furniture, hangings and curtains, in the days

of Red Lion Square, when tolerable chairs and tables, honest materials and satisfactory colourings were not to be bought, drove him into joinery, upholstery, weaving, dyeing, printing upon cotton and linen. Thus also, the lack of a "decent-seeming" book of his own drove him into mastering the many intricacies of printing, and of the tributary crafts that have to do with it.
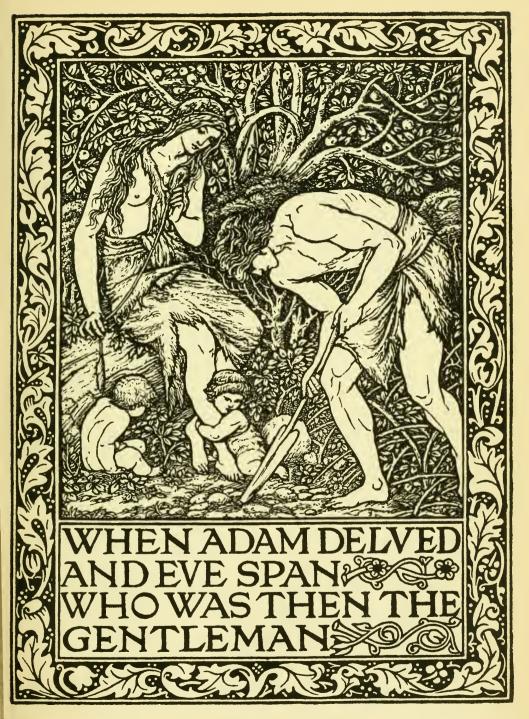
No craft or art was ever dropped by him so long as there was any need that he should practise it, nor did it ever become uninteresting through the study or practice of another. Once mastered, it remained with him as a permanent possession, a matter of deep and continued concern, to which any number of others might be added, but which could be supplanted by none. But here, once more, it was the *work* that mattered, and not his own skill or his own joy in it. Ready as he was to take up an art or a craft at need, he was equally ready to surrender it, in whole or in part, to any friend or fellow-worker who could and would carry it through as thoroughly and well as himself. Thus he gave over painting to Edward Burne-Jones, architecture to Philip Webb, and much of the work at Merton Abbey to pupils or assistants. At Merton Abbey, of course, he retained the full control of all materials, methods and processes, keeping a vigilant eye upon the product, and lending a hand anywhere and anywhen did he see need.

This absence of jealousy, and readiness to share the work and the joy and triumph of the work with others, was due to an utter lack of self-consciousness, which also goes far to explain the universality of his genius and the tremendous amount of his varied output. By nature, indeed, he was as utterly single-minded as in material achievement he was manysided. To use a cant-word of to-day, his attitude was as completely "objective" as that of Shakespeare; or, using a term of his own, he was never for an instant a "go-to-ist." That is to say, he was constitutionally incapable of bothering about his own reactions or emotions, of thinking or saying: "Go to, *I* will do thus and so; this or that work is *mine*!" He thought always of *the* work, *this* work, or *that* work, but never of *my* work; and condemned "go-to-ism" in others, not only for its immediate effects, vanity, self-seeking, and so on, but because it led so directly to "see-what-I-can-do-ism," which was bad for one's work.

WHEN ADAM DELVED
AND EVE SPAN·
WHO WAS THEN THE
GENTLEMAN·

FRONTISPIECE TO "A DREAM OF JOHN BALL" BY WILLIAM MORRIS

Drawn by E. Burne-Jones.   Engraved by W. H. Hooper.   Border by Morris

See-what-I-can-do-ism, in any field of activity, irked him to the point of blasphemy. "Michel Angelo I don't like," said he. "No, I'm hanged if I do, big as he is! It isn't that I blame him for knowing how learned and all-fired clever he was. A chap can hardly help knowing that he knows his work. But he let that good conceit of himself get between him and his work. He couldn't keep his eyes in the boat for thinking about it. Now, you take his Moses, and you can see that Moses himself or what Moses stood for didn't interest him a little bit; or, at any rate, not enough, compared to turning Moses into a peg to hang his own cleverness on. He made of poor old Moses an opportunity for showing off his knowledge of anatomy and skill of hand. What he really liked was to pile up difficulties for the sake of coping with them, foreshortenings, and bunched-up muscles, and that sort of thing, and he took jolly good care that they were such as everyone could see. It was just as clever of Blondin to walk his rope at six feet from the ground as across Niagara, but the gapemouthed public wouldn't have understood that, or paid as much to see it. There wasn't the same chance of seeing him break his neck."

To divert his attention from the work in hand by making him self-conscious, or by betraying self-consciousness, made him acutely uncomfortable, and the discomfort was likely to be passed on. A friend, classed by him in conversation among "teachers," was foolish enough to interrupt by deprecating the term, and was instantly told: "Well, for a learner you're damnably talkative!"

Adapting a text, so that it read: "Seek ye first the glory of *the work* and all these things shall be added unto you," he opposed "seek-ye-firsts" to "go-to-ists" and "see-what-I-can-do-ists" as being the true artists. And there was more in this than apt phrasing or a telling antithesis; it expressed the very heart of his creed: work in fellowship, and that alone, realizes the divine in man. To put oneself in the first place is to distort the scheme of things, and open the door to a base form of idolatry, while to barter away the purity of one's art for place, fame or money is to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost. "A painter," said he, "should be as transparently impersonal as a window." That this was a counsel of perfection, of course, he knew well enough; but he held, and held strongly, that the

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mere effort at impersonality goes far towards aiding the underlying personality to come through. "If a man isn't thinking about himself, he *is* himself; if he thinks about himself, he's likely to drift into thinking about what somebody else will think of him, and that's fatal. . . . Stick two fellows in front of an apple-tree, neither of whom thinks about himself, and they'll both get the apple-tree, but in their own despite there'll be a difference, and the difference will be that of personality."

Nor had he any sense of higher and lower, either with regard to the particular kind of work to be done or to the men who took part in it. The work, of course, must come under the rule into which he had compressed the law and the prophets: "Have nothing in your houses which you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful." Note in passing, as a corrective to many silly ideas about Morris, the relative stress upon utility and beauty!

Once the work had answered this requirement, it was worth doing with all one's might, and any man who took part in it, let that part be never so subordinate, if he gave of his best, was accepted and treated as a brother-craftsman and therefore an equal. "To his own workmen," says A. Clutton-Brock, "he was masterful enough at times, but as their foreman and not as their social superior. He lost his temper with them sometimes, but always as man with man, and they recognized one of themselves when he did so." Thus it had been from the outset of his career, and thus it was at the Kelmscott Press, where everyone from devil to overseer felt pride in being a co-worker, *with* but not *under* him, taking his fierily worded criticism or warm praise as they came and were meant, because of care for the work.

This attitude of mind, wholly natural and untainted with condescension, while it enabled him, without thought on his part, to bring out of men more than they had ever imagined to be in them—in many cases more than they were ever to bring out of themselves again—was resented by "see-what-I-can-do-ists" and those whose uneasy egotism it inevitably left unsated. He has even been accused of callousness and an incapacity for personal friendship by men who—unconsciously, it may be—demanded an appreciation of their personal merit or personal charm that he could not or did not express. The

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truth being that his preoccupation with what was in hand, his own work or that of the man in front of him, would necessarily blind him to an itching self-love that he had never felt in himself, and could not therefore allow for in anyone else.

To his lifelong and well-tried capacity for warm personal friendship there is no lack of irrefutable testimony, and the artist or craftsman who came into touch with him, not overmastered by vanity or self-seeking, did not always hesitate on the hither side of idolatry. Indeed, it might almost be said that a man's response to Morris measured the degree to which his work or himself came first in his concern. Approach Morris for information or advice, and he was wholly yours for as long as your honest need lasted; but go to him in the hope of undeserved praise or some repeatable flattery, and you came empty away, sometimes turning into an enemy on the strength of it. For he did not suffer fools gladly, even when it would have been his interest to do so. A wealthy customer got hold of him once at Morris & Co.'s, worrying and wearying him with a demand for "subdued" colours, until at length he threw open the street door, and shouted: "If it's mud you want, there's lots of it out there!"

It is only fair to say, fair to some who fell away from him, that his own titanic powers, and the conviction formed from his own experience that no craft or art was difficult in the absence of a physical disability—its material might be refractory or the mastery of its technique a matter of patience, but that was all—put an undue strain upon any weaker man who tried to keep up with him; a strain he had never felt, and could therefore neither realize nor fully sympathize with.

As he gave, so did he take, teaching and learning with a like spirit and a like restrained impetuosity; not that there was any man who could give Morris anything like what Morris had to give him; but have anything to tell him that he wanted to know—and in connexion with work of any kind there was little he did not—he would get out of you all you knew; not seldom far more than you had known you knew. It is pertinent here to recall that a favourite game of his, played with his family and visitors at Kelmscott Manor, was "Twenty Questions," and that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge declared he could have been the greatest cross-examiner of all time. As apprentice printer,

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somewhat has been said, and more will have to be, with regard to his relations with Emery Walker. Those with C. T. Jacobi of the Chiswick Press will presently call for mention. The secrets of punchcutting he absorbed from Edward P. Prince, and his acquaintance with wood-engraving was added to in talks with W. H. Hooper, though wood-engraving he practised no more and punchcutting he never attempted. With Joseph Batchelor for mentor, he studied the technique of paper-making, making two sheets with his own hand; but, finding that he could rely upon getting what he wanted, did not once revisit the mill. He talked and listened to compositors, his intent eye taking in every movement of their hands, and every detail of their tools, until he knew as much as they did of spacing, justification, and all the rest of it. With pressmen he spent hours, familiarizing himself with every particularity of their doings, from the reason for damping paper in a given way, and to a given degree, to that for a lingering "dwell" when the type had been brought into touch with it. But, again, he never stood at case or pulled a sheet; his trusted fellow-crafts-men were there for that.

There was, however, no theory or hard-and-fast rule in these matters, and he frequently indulged in what he called "the laziness of fiddling over detail." His friend and fellow-member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Thackeray Turner, one day found him spotting the back-ground of a design with dots, and heard him asked why, in the name of goodness, he did not hand that work over to an assistant? "Do you think," demanded Morris, "that I am such a fool, after having had the grind of doing the design, as to let another man have the fun of putting in the dots?"

It has already been said that "relaxation" in the case of Morris was a relative term, and "laziness" as he applied it to himself was that also. When he was "fiddling over detail" or indulging in "laziness," though it did mean in a measure that he was really "having fun," it meant yet more that "the man in the backshop" was busy, and that the next "leaf" of the "arti-choke" was being matured. When it is told of him that he wrote seven hundred verses at a sitting, the story is usually nar-rated as though this were an instance of the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling, of inspiration at white heat. As a matter of fact,

Morris had composed and perfected the poem, as was his usual way, before ever he set pen to paper, and then wrote it out at a rush to get rid of it. I have often heard a compositor speak of a "take" of Morris's copy as "a fair treat"; there was hardly a blot, an alteration or an erasure from start to finish, or one unclear letter. It might or might not have been written by instalments, while a dozen other jobs were being carried through, but it read and looked as though the pen had moved swiftly and uninterruptedly, without stumble or hesitation, from beginning to end. It may be suggested, parenthetically, that from this method of working comes the *spoken* quality of his verse, its address entirely to the ear, so that it must be read aloud if its full beauty is to be brought out, which worries the run of critics, accustomed as they are to verse that has been composed and worked over piecemeal in *written* form, and addressed to the eye like a piece of word-mosaic, as most of it is.

Morris's many-layered mental fertility has been several times referred to, but the indefatigable industry of his "man in the backshop"—who should, more accurately, be spoken of in the plural—had to be seen to be believed in. When he was translating the *Odyssey*, he was at the same time writing his *Aims of Art*, his *Dream of John Ball*, endless notes and articles for the *Commonweal*, pamphlets and lectures on Socialism or Architecture, as well as turning out design after design for wallpapers, chintzes, glass, etc. He would be standing at an easel or sitting with a sketchblock in front of him, charcoal, brush or pencil in hand, and all the while would be grumbling Homer's Greek under his breath—"bumble-beeing" as his family called it—the design coming through in clear unhesitating strokes. Then the note of the grumbling changed, for the turn of the English had come, and he would prowl about the room, filling and lighting his pipe, halting to add a touch or two at one or other easel, still grumbling, go to his writing-table, snatch up his pen and write furiously for a while—twenty, fifty, a hundred or more lines, as the case might be. While his hand was thus busied, the "man in the backshop" was ruminating the next thing; for the speed of his hand would gradually slacken, his eye would wander to an easel, a sketch-block, or to some one of the manuscripts in progress, and that

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would have its turn. There was something wellnigh terrifying to a youthful onlooker in the deliberate ease with which he interchanged so many forms of creative work, taking up each one exactly at the point at which he had laid it aside, and never halting to recapture the thread of his thought, or to refer back to that which he had already written. It was as though one had been admitted to the Olympian workshop of an artificer god.

Questioned on his way of working and how it seemed to him, he was at a loss for an answer, and finally said: "Well! You see, one's head is rather like an everlasting onion; you peel off the idea you see, and there's another underneath it, and so on." I tried to get him to tell me at another time how a design took shape in his mind, but any sort of introspection was strange and uncomfortable to him, and it was not easy to say. Realizing that the inquiry was not wantonly made, or without an anxiety to understand, however, he was patiently ready to do his best. "When one began," he said, " of course one had to learn all about the nets—you know what they are?—and that sort of thing, just as one had to learn the rules of grammar, and one had to keep them in mind while doing one's 'prentice-work, but that's a long while ago, and I don't think about them any more than I do about grammar. To confess the truth, although I haven't forgotten as much about them as about grammar, I have to dig for them when I want them. I know what's right and what's wrong, but I couldn't always tell why. I look at the space to be covered, and say to myself that it has to be reproduced on such and such a scale, and the repeats will run in such and such a way, and that a rose or honeysuckle or whatnot would be the sort of thing to suit it, and there the matter ends for the time being. It goes somewhere at the back of my mind, and when it comes up again, it may be as the whole thing, or only the general hang of it and a bit of the detail. Sometimes it seems to come out of the paper of its own accord, misty at first and getting clearer each time I look at it. But whether it comes as a whole or gradually, come it does, and that's all I can say of it."

On another occasion, returning to a point already touched upon: "Inspiration be damned for a yarn! It belongs to the mystery-man's bag of tricks. If you have found work you can

do, and do it for all you are worth, inspiration will come when it's called for. Mind you, I assume it's work you enjoy doing! And, of course, nobody's always at his best; and, especially if he sticks at one thing—say poetry—the inspiration—and that, after all, is only to say the impulse—will halt at whiles, to say the least of it. When that happens, he'd be better off if he had something else to go on with. If you have to screw yourself up to writing a poem when the poem isn't there to be written, or flog yourself into chairmaking for the mere sake of your wages, the poem or the chair is pretty well bound to suffer. . . . Don't forget that art, if it mean anything at all beyond sheer honest work well done, means the craftsman's pleasure in following his craft, and the unaccountable quality that gets into his work thereby."

Because he was ready to learn from anybody and everybody who had anything whatever to teach him, old or young, ancient or modern, of high degree or low, and was never backward in acknowledging a debt, unintelligent and whitehanded apostles of "self-expression" have denied him originality; just as, on account of his outspoken admiration for the work done during the Middle Age, or of his fierce attacks upon commercialism, he has been dubbed sentimentalist by the ecstatics of mechanism. But he took example by his predecessors and instruction or advice from his contemporaries with an equal and an unfailing appetite, because, as has already been said, he thought of the *work* first, last, and all the time. When he fixed upon Master Nicholas Jenson the Frenchman for a precedent, it was in order that by study and practice he might come to understand the *methods* and *principles* upon which Jenson worked as a type-designer, while tradition was yet fully alive, so that he might apply these to his own practice, rather than in order to *imitate* Jenson's *type*, to do which he would have regarded, and rightly, as a silly waste of time. What need was there to imitate what was there already, to be taken ready-made if that were all?
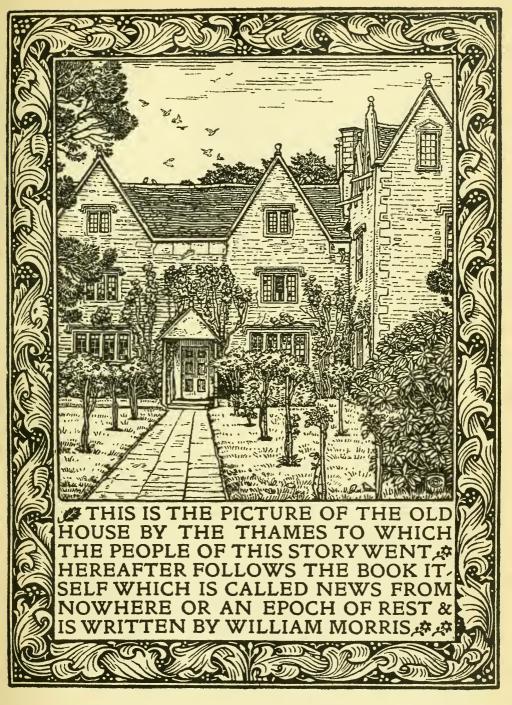
As to sentimentalism, no fairminded reader can fail to see, alike in his writings upon art and in those upon social reform, that he was practical in the extreme. That is, if it be "practical" to insist upon genuine material and good workmanship; upon wares being honestly made for the use and pleasure of

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man, not merely or primarily to sell at a profit; and upon such a change in political and social arrangements as would favourize, if not ensure, trustworthy products and fair dealing in their exchange. There was no sentimentality in him, nor could he stand it in others. Of a man who gushed about art, he said that "a man who talks about art in that kind of a way is capable of using the word as an adjective"; and of one who affirmed that he "strove to be one with the universe," he drily remarked: "the danger is, one can't always tell whether one isn't making over the universe until it is one with oneself!" A "twittering female," who thought she was pleasing him by professing to be "raised above the sordid cares" of her household by her absorption in music, provoked the rejoinder that "there is more art in a well-cooked and well-served dinner than in a dozen oratorios"; and an ecclesiastic who unctuously declared that he followed saintly example in being all things to all men, was told that what he really meant was readiness to be anything to any man. Indeed, he never went so near to a Johnsonian brutality as when angered by gush or affectation; though he usually endured in silence, unless the offender were a friend, only breaking out as exemplified when the ordeal had been unduly prolonged.

His attitude towards the Middle Age, again, was not in any way determined by mere sentiment. It was the *work* of the Middle Age, at once honest and invariably beautiful, that appealed to him, and the colourful vigour, unequalled since, which animated and was met by it. And his unanswerable claim was that an epoch in which such work was done, even when every possible drawback in the shape of disorder and violence had been allowed for, must in some way or other have been a better epoch than our own, for the productive craftsman at any rate. Had he lived until now, by the way, he would have been able to point out that industrialism does not necessarily lead to order and respect for life or property! That able-bodied non-producers, idle of malice aforethought, are better off nowadays than ever before, if it had any weight at all in his eyes, told against the world of commercialism, and not in its favour.

At no time did he advocate a return to or copying of the Middle Age or any of its methods, even its methods of work,

THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE OLD
HOUSE BY THE THAMES TO WHICH
THE PEOPLE OF THIS STORY WENT
HEREAFTER FOLLOWS THE BOOK IT
SELF WHICH IS CALLED NEWS FROM
NOWHERE OR AN EPOCH OF REST &
IS WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS

FRONTISPIECE TO "NEWS FROM NOWHERE" BY WILLIAM MORRIS: KELMSCOTT
MANOR, OXFORDSHIRE

Drawn by C. M. Gere.   Engraved by W. H. Hooper.   Border by Morris

further than these were eternal and universal in their validity. What he did advocate, in unmistakable terms and with vehemence, was that we should learn from the Middle Age what it alone is able to teach us, not revive or imitate it through undiscriminating admiration, and less yet condone its defects of any kind for the sake of its picturesqueness. We should study it in order to find out for our own guidance what conditioned the lofty standard of work to which it attained, and learn how to re-knit the broken threads of tradition, then intact, applying our discoveries to the daily work of our own day, adapting them where necessary to our increased mechanical powers and wider desires.

His objection to machinery, again, was thoroughly practical, not being to machinery in itself but the evil use made of it, and arising from no sentimental prejudice or fanciful idealization of the past. Here also, his attitude was determined by *quality of work*. Where the employment of machinery entailed no detriment upon the work, either directly or through the enslavement of the men who did the work, he was willing to accept and adopt it without reluctance or scruple. In addition to "plenty of unnecessary work which is merely painful," he frankly owned that there was "some necessary labour even which is not pleasant in itself"; and here, said he, was the legitimate sphere of machinery, going so far as to assert that "if machinery had been used for minimizing such labour, the utmost ingenuity would not have been wasted upon it."

For weaving plain cloth in quantity, that work being monotonous and as well, or better, done by the power-loom, the machine was in place; but for patterned stuffs, where the weaver could enjoy his work, besides doing it with a freedom of execution and a liveliness of beauty no machine could equal, none but handlooms ought ever to be employed. His type for the Kelmscott Press was cast by machine, as there was nothing to be gained by handcasting that he could see; "and from all I hear, there wasn't much fun in it for the poor devils who jogged and bumped the moulds about." If only the machine could have dealt with his paper and ink, and given him the result at which he aimed, he would have installed a machine "as lief as not, though I'm afraid Collins"—his leading pressman —"would swear and cry his eyes out if he couldn't any longer

feel the type come home, or pause to let the ink sink in as it should."

"It's the stupid way in which machinery is used that I object to, and what goes with it. Whatever gives pleasure in the doing—say weaving a jolly pattern—should be reserved for the hand. A weaver at the handloom, so long as he's turning out something that's worth doing, is decently paid and not over-driven, has no bad time of it, I can tell you! But the other sort of thing, long stretches of calico or unpatterned cloth or fleck-speckled commercial tweed, give that to a machine, and be damned to it! But, mind you, even then, there's a danger. You've got to have somebody to look after the machine, and if he does that all the time, he soon becomes less of a man than part of the machine. Then, the machine means cheapness in one way or another, and cheapness in one way means cheapness in another, and once cheapness gets in at the window, quality's likely sooner or later to be thrown out of the door."

He condemned the machine, then, in so far as he did condemn it, upon two counts: inferiority of product, though this was often less due to the machine in itself than to the profiteering use made of it; loss of pleasure and pride in his work on the part of the producer, and the widespreading degradation which thence ensues. The machine, in short, is a good servant when properly used, but a bad master when used as it is.

That the loss of pleasure on the part of the workman had but small appeal for his more prosperous hearers, he knew only too well, and he therefore stressed it all the more. "The hope of pleasure in the work itself, how strange that hope must seem to my readers—to most of them! Yet I think that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their faculties, and that even beasts rejoice in being lithe and swift and strong. But a man at work, making something that he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as those of his body. Not only his own thoughts but the thoughts of men of past ages guide his hands; and as a part of the human race, he creates. If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful." Elsewhere he wrote: "Men whose hands were skilled in fashioning things could not help thinking the while, and soon found out that their deft fingers could express some

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part of the tangle of their thoughts, and that this new pleasure hindered not their daily work; for in their very labour lay the very material in which their thought could be embodied; and thus, though they laboured, they laboured somewhat for their pleasure and uncompelled, and had conquered the curse of toil, and were men."

His hatred of commercialism and acceptance of socialism, in like manner, took rise from *work*, and were not rooted in a reaction to the wrongs of Labour, or due to a doctrinaire adherence to the Rights of Man. Though he felt keenly and wrote bitterly of the foul misery that was in his time, and is in ours, the accepted lot of the toiling masses; though he abhorred the stark injustice of social inequality, and the stupid wastefulness involved in the political domination of class by class, his discontent had begun in the workshop, dye-room and weaving shed, when he started out to do good work, to produce wares that were honest in material, with a character in them derived from the loving and thoughtful work put into them, permanent and clear in colour as well as fertile and rich in design. At every step he took or attempted to take, he was met and hindered by debasement of material, dishonesty of method and the degradation of workmen under commercialism. For a long time he strove to maintain the fiction that he was a "dreamer of dreams, born out of [his] due time," and to demand: "Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?" But his own passionate craftsmanship, and resentment against the conditions which destroyed craft-happiness for his fellow-men, thrust him continually forward, and he was gradually driven into taking up an extreme position by a growing realization that nothing worth doing could be done towards remedying matters through isolated efforts, through any political measures intended to be merely palliative, or through the withdrawal from the world-market of any well-intentioned group or community. Short of a reform so sweeping and complete as to be spoken of no otherwise than as a revolution, he came at length to see no hope for the revival of craftsmanship, with all that that implies. "As I strove to stir up people to this reform [of the arts] I found that the causes of the vulgarities of society lay deeper than I had thought, and little by little I was driven to the conclusion that all these uglinesses are but the outward

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expression of the innate moral baseness into which we are forced by our present system of society, and that it is futile to attempt to deal with them from the outside. Whatever I have written or spoken from the platform on these social subjects is the result of the truths of Socialism meeting my earlier impulse, and giving it a definite and more serious aim."

As to the coming about or bringing about the revolution that must come, he held his mind open from the beginning to the end. At no time a believer in the employment of armed force, though fearing that the "other side" might resort to it as a means of repression, and thereby drive the workers into fighting in self-defence, and remembering our so-called Reformation, our Civil War and the French Revolution, with all their bloodshed and cruelty—and, what was almost worse in his eyes, the destruction of ancient buildings and other works of art, the externalized and embodied thoughts and feelings of bygone men—he neither hoped for nor desired anything more speedy than a change of opinion, a growing realization that "fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death," taking shape as it progressed in legislative reform, perhaps, but more certainly and effectively through a steadily altering attitude towards work.

At no time did he regard himself as taking part in the "Labour Movement," with which or with Trades Unions he had never very much connexion or concern, but in a movement for the reform of society as an organic whole, from which every man of goodwill had much to gain, whatever his rank or condition; not a movement for the overturn of one class and the uplifting of another, excepting in so far as these might be inseparable accidents of the enfranchisement of Man as a race from the chains of ignorance, unfairness and lack of opportunity. He neither desired nor endeavoured to lessen the *amount* of work, either in intensity or length of time, that any free man might have to put into the task of hand and brain; let the task itself be made interesting, and the conditions under which it was performed made something more than merely endurable, and work would once again become a pleasure instead of a penalty. Nor, otherwise than as incidental to a decent life, did the question of wages excite him; the wage-system, indeed, was irredeemably evil, and no amount of amending

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it would make it other than a makeshift and mischiefmaking method of distributing the rewards of industry; to end it rather than to amend it must be the sole way of dealing with it. His ideal and aim was always to lessen the *non-humanity* of labour, in its monotony and lack of inspiration or incentive, and the *inhumanity* of labour, in its immolation of man to machine, the brutalization which comes of sordid surroundings in factory and home, thwarting the growth and crippling the soul of man, woman and child; to lessen these evils until they disappeared, until the artisan could feel himself once more a freeman and a craftsman, enjoying the unimpeded exercise of his fully-developed faculties, proud of their fruits, and receiving a due share of all the amenities of life.

Harnessing the powers of Nature to "save labour"—that is, to save the cost of labour for the benefit of the capitalist—had not in any way improved the position of the labourer; had, indeed, done exactly the opposite. Toiling "consciously for a livelihood, and blindly for a mere abstraction of a world-market which they do not know of," the factory-hands of to-day are in painful opposition to their craftsmen-fathers, who "worked to produce wares, and to earn their livelihood by means of them, and their only market they had close at hand, and they knew it well." To-day, their market is distant and the consumer unknown to them, and the personal interest in their work and its fate has departed. "Now, the result of their work passes through the hands of half a dozen middlemen; then, they worked directly for their neighbours, understanding their wants, and with no one coming between them." They have lost their freedom in two directions; "people work under the direction of an absolute master whose power is restrained by a trades union, in absolute hostility to that master," so that they are held back on both sides from putting forth what powers they may possess; whereas aforetime, "they worked under the direction of their own wills by means of trade guilds." They have been set apart as a separate class, herded into the bricken horror of mean streets, and cut off from all natural contact with an unspoilt world. "Now, the factory hand, the townsman, is a different animal from the countryman. Then, every man was interested in agriculture, and lived with the green fields coming close to his own doors.... In those days, daily life as a whole

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was pleasant, although its accidents might be rough and tragic. Now, daily life is dreary, stupid and wooden, and the only pleasure is in excitement, even if that pleasure should be more or less painful or terrible."

That misery was rife in the Middle Ages, as in every age in the world's history of which we have knowledge, he freely admitted, but "it is clear that such misery as existed," said he, "was different in essence from that of our own times; one piece of evidence alone forces this conclusion upon us; the Middle Ages were essentially the epoch of *popular* art, the art of the people: whatever the conditions of the life of the time, they produced an enormous volume of tangible and visible beauty, even taken *per se*, and still more remarkable when considered beside the sparse population of those ages. The misery from amidst which it came, whatever it was, must have been something totally unlike, and surely far less degrading than, the misery of modern Whitechapel, from which not the faintest scintilla of art can be struck."

Robert Steele and W. R. Lethaby, in their *Quarterly Review* article upon Morris (October 1899), say: "It was the taste for order and social harmony, and the love of beauty, feelings essentially aristocratic and artistic, that drove him into revolt against the social anarchy which is the result of Whig *laissez-faire* under democratic conditions, when he compared it with the regulated economy which was the theory of mediaeval life. Morris was a Socialist because he rebelled against the capitalist system, which imposes uniformity on craftsmanship and treats the workman as a mere unit, and against uncontrolled competition, which sacrifices beauty to cheapness, solid work to seductive shams, and art to machinery. There was, in fact, nothing modern or scientific about Morris's Socialism. He turned to the Middle Ages, because what he detested did not then exist, but he never formulated a scientific scheme of Socialism. Indeed, it is doubtful if he can be called a Socialist at all: he objected as vigorously to the tyranny of collectivism as to that of capital. We are inclined to hazard the paradox that, if Morris was a Socialist, he was so just because he was so intense an individualist."

His ideal of life as it should and might be is described in his *Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere*, and in many lec-
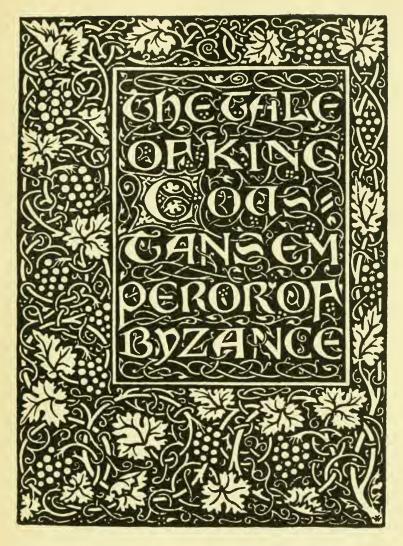
tures. A thumbnail sketch of it is given, incidentally and as it were by accident, in his *Roots of the Mountains*: "Thus then lived this folk in much plenty and ease of life, though not delicately or desiring things out of measure. They wrought with their hands, and wearied themselves; and they rested from their toil and were merry: tomorrow was not a burden to them, nor yesterday a thing which they would fain forget: life shamed them not, nor did death make them afraid."

IV

APPRENTICESHIP

IT so happens that, in the first year of Morris's apprenticeship as a printer, the *Athenæum*—then the leading critical journal in literary matters of the English-speaking world—reviewed his *Dream of John Ball*, appraising him thus: "Any critic who, having for contemporaries such writers as Lord Tennyson, Mr. Browning, Mr. Swinburne, and Mr. William Morris, fails to see that he lives in a period of great poets, may rest assured that he is a critic born—may rest assured that had he lived in the days of the Elizabethans he would have joined the author of the *Return from Parnassus* in despising the un-academic author of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Among the band of great contemporary poets what is the special position of him who, having set his triumphant hand to everything from the sampler up to the epic, has now invented a system of poetic socialism and expounded it in a brand-new kind of prose-fiction . . . who never passes into ratiocination or rhetoric, never passes into excessive word-painting or into euphuism, never speaks so loud as to be heard rather than overheard, but, on the contrary, gives us always clear and simple pictures, and always in musical language . . . of him who is the very ideal, if not of the poet as *vates*, yet of the poet as 'maker'—the poet who always looks out upon life through a poetic atmosphere, which . . . is as simple and clear as the air of a May morning?" And the *Athenæum* answers its own question by deciding that he possessed "the richest and most varied endowments of any man of our time."

This was the man who now set himself, as humbly and thoroughly as though he had been a raw beginner, to seek out

FRONTISPIECE TO "A TALE OF THE EMPEROR COUSTANS DONE
OUT OF THE ANCIENT FRENCH" BY WILLIAM MORRIS

Drawn by Morris.   Engraved by W. H. Hooper

and come to an understanding of the craft and mystery of book-printing. That he spent a full year upon his preliminary studies before turning his 'prentice hand to practising any one of the many branches of the trade, is in itself good and sufficient proof of the thoroughgoing care with which he worked. Allowance has once more to be made, of course, for the uninterrupted pursuit of his other activities. Not only did he supervise and actively take part in the industries of Morris & Co., write articles and notes for the *Commonweal* week by week and occasionally for other publications, lecture and speak in many parts of the country for the societies of which he was a member, but produce two romances in the course of the same year, original in style as well as in story, and make of these in their material shape the object of experiments in printing. Formidable as is this total, which might be increased were it worth while, it left him time and energy for getting through an amount of study and thought that would have occupied the full working-year of an ordinary man.

His two new romances, I have said, were treated by him as matter for experiment in printing. In so treating them, he had a threefold aim in view: to see for himself what could be done at the best with existing material and under existing conditions; to make sure that no stone had been left unturned in his determined quest for a complete and practical knowledge of book-printing; last and least important, that he might have a book of his own to show at the next Arts and Crafts Exhibition.

Though he had been driven by hard experience in craft after craft into recognizing the Middle Age as the time of times for an exemplar of method, no less than of material or of result, it was not in him to take this or anything else for granted when turning to an unfamiliar field, or to rest content with an *a priori* condemnation of everything modern. With as painstaking a scrupulosity as that of Darwin in seeking for facts that would test, or destroy if need be, his great hypothesis, Morris had to make faithful trial of materials, methods and tools that lay to hand in order to know exactly where and in what manner they might be improved upon or put aside. And he had to acquire a technical knowledge of every department of book-printing before venturing to work at any one of them.

That the attention he gave to its printing detracted in no

way from the literary worth of the *House of the Wolfings*, the first of the two romances to which allusion has been made, may be seen from the enthusiastic reception it met with and the place it still holds among his works. According to the *Athenæum*, the author of this "superb epic" had invented "a form of art so new that new canons of criticism have to be formulated and applied to it. Without going so far as to affirm that this book is the most important contribution to pure literature that has appeared in our time, we may without hesitation affirm it to be one of the most remarkable. . . . Mr. Morris has here enriched contemporary literature with a poetic prose of his own, a prose that has all the qualities of poetry except metre . . . a style such as only one living man can ever hope to write. So poetic, indeed, is the prose in this fascinating volume that even the verse, fine as it is, seems to fade in the midst of it, as the linnet's voice fades when the blackcap or the nightingale begins."

Disinterested and unwelcomed homage was paid to the book from another point of view. Soon after it appeared, a friend found Morris in one of his explosive moments over a letter he had received from a "fool of a German." The writer, a distinguished archaeologist, said that he had hitherto regarded himself as being acquainted with all the *quellen* in existence, from which knowledge might be drawn with regard to Teutonic life in its later tribal stage, when the Romans held Gaul, but that he now found himself in presence of high learning that reduced him to humility. He therefore begged his honoured, illustrious and most erudite colleague to indicate the newly found *quellen* to which alone he could attribute the miraculous and never-to-be-overpraised fullness and accuracy of the redintegration before him. "Doesn't the fool realize," demanded Morris at the top of his voice, "that it's a romance, a work of fiction—that it's all LIES! Hasn't the pedantic ass ever heard of creative imagination, or known an artist of any kind? . . . *Ex pede Herculem*, don't you know? . . . Just as old Owen could fill out an extinct bird with only a bone or two to go upon, an artist who knows his business can fill out an epoch on the strength of half a dozen details. . . . Well, more than half a dozen, but all the same . . .!"

For the printing of the book, Morris went again to the

Chiswick Press, of which his friend, C. T. Jacobi, was then the head. He could hardly have discovered a more kindred spirit among working printers, or one who would have devoted so much time and care to inducting him into the details of the craft. With C. T. Jacobi at the Chiswick Press, with Emery Walker at home, he spent hours in comparing types and papers and inks, as they were then, with one another and with those in use in the early days of printing, as well as in studying the methods of handling and dealing with them in the production of a book.

Curiously enough, and by an undesigned coincidence, the type finally chosen for the *House of the Wolfings* was the "Basel," in which a trial-page of the *Earthly Paradise* had been set in 1860. This "Basel" type had been adapted from Froben's roman letter by Charles Whittingham II., and used by him in printing a devotional work, the Rev. W. Calvert's *Wife's Manual*, for Longmans in 1854. Authorities upon type have hitherto given the date as 1856, but that was the date of the second edition. The punches for it were cut and the type cast by William Howard of Great Queen Street, who had been a seaman and is legendary as an eccentric, but was a fine example of the highly skilled "little masters," now extinct as the Great Auk. It had never been a commercial success, as may readily be understood when its appearance is contrasted with that of the average type of the 'fifties. Its heavy long esses, not used in the *House of the Wolfings*, and the slanting hair-line of its ees, which were, catch the eye at once, and one realizes how uncongenial they must have been to a generation that sat upon horsehair, admired antimacassars, and thought of Martin Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* as inspired and inspiring poetry.

Time and thought were given to proportioning and balancing opposite pages in such a way as to make the opening the unit, instead of the page, as well as to proportioning and balancing the page in itself. The titlepage was treated in an entirely new manner, though it has been so freely imitated since as to have lost all appearance of novelty by now. Up to then, the average printer had looked upon a titlepage as an opportunity for "display," and had prided himself on the variety in size and fashion of the types he could cram into it. Even the best printers had neglected its possibilities, and early printers

afforded no precedent, so that Morris's originality, on this point at least, must pass unchallenged, as must the simple dignity and real beauty achieved through unity of letter and the manner in which it was disposed upon the page.

There was, at first, to have been a block to connect and harmonize the massive title with the lighter imprint, but this gave way in the end to a copy of verses, written to the exact measure of the blank to be filled. This detail has not been so extensively imitated, as it is not easy to find a poet who can shape his poem to a given space, and still make it as limpid and spontaneous as though it had leaped into being as an improvisation.

Buxton Forman tells of meeting Morris by chance at the Chiswick Press: "Presently down came the proof of the title-page. It did not read quite as now: the difference, I think, was in the fourth and fifth lines, where the words stood 'written in prose and verse by William Morris.' Now, unhappily, the words and the type did not so accord as to come up to Morris's standard of decorativeness. The line wanted tightening up: there was a three-cornered consultation between the Author, the Manager, and myself. The word *in* was to be inserted— 'written in prose and *in* verse'—to gain the necessary fullness of line. I mildly protested that the former reading was the better sense, and that it should not be sacrificed to avoid a slight excess of white that no one would notice. 'Ha!' said Morris, 'now what would you say if I told you that the verses on the titlepage were written just to fill up the great white lower half? Well, that was what happened!'"

Large-paper copies were printed in accordance with custom, the pages being carefully re-imposed for the sake of balancing them in a larger opening. No sooner did Morris see the final result, however, than he vowed that never again would he fall into the "large-paper" trap, as both type and page of type had been dwarfed and greyed by the great expanse of surrounding white.

His next experiment was made upon the *Roots of the Mountains*, a longer, stronger and more assured work, declared by Robert Steele to be "perhaps the finest story of Northern life ever written. In this romance the poet touched the high-water mark of his prose style; its archaisms, if such there be, are exactly necessary for the expression of his thought, and the

narrative itself is exciting and well-planned." As a conception, Buxton Forman said that the *Roots of the Mountains* is "no whit inferior to the *House of the Wolfings*. There are those who award it the higher place. . . . For consistency of detail, these men and women leave nothing to desire; for realization of place, personality, costume and institution, the work is unsurpassed; and in the one matter which in this case is very important, the invention of battle incident, Homer himself could not afford to give the modern poet points." Theodore Watts-Dunton described the fighting in which the Yellow Men are finally defeated and their power destroyed as "one of the most splendid battlepieces in all poetry."

This was also printed at the Chiswick Press, and in the same type as its predecessor, except that the e with a slanting hair-line was replaced by an e in which the hair-line is level. This change, made in deference to a widespread protest, was immediately regretted by Morris, as may be seen from the fact that he gave the hair-line of the e in his "Golden" type a decided slant.

There is a difference in the pages also, which are even more carefully balanced, while dropped heads, headlines and numbering in the top corner have been abandoned. Shoulder notes have replaced headlines, and the pages are centrally numbered at the foot. This makes a decided improvement in the opening, and the precedent then set up was followed in all the books printed at the Kelmscott Press. The titlepage is like that of the *House of the Wolfings*, and bears a copy of verses, again written to measure, but again betraying no trace of having proceeded from anything else than an unpremeditated burst of inspiration.

Instead of large-paper copies, a number were printed on a specially made Whatman paper, and bound in Merton printed linen. The publishers, Reeves & Turner, were puzzled by the new departure, and much perturbed as to the wording of their advertisement, and in the end announced a "superior edition of 250 copies." A certain amount of the special paper was left over, and eventually used for the earlier book-lists of the Kelmscott Press.

A translation from the Icelandic, the *Story of Gunnlaug Wormtongue*, was also put in hand at the Chiswick Press, the

type chosen for it being a black-letter adapted from one of Caxton's. But Morris lost interest in it before it had gone very far, being by now much too deeply absorbed in type-designing, papermaking and so on, to take it seriously. Work on it dragged along until near the end of 1890, and though it was finally printed, it was never published. A few copies were bound, and are to be found in private hands, but the bulk of the edition remained in sheets until after Morris's death.

In addition to being absorbed in his preparations for the Kelmscott Press, it is probable that "this master of all the leading crafts that can be named," as Buxton Forman called him, unconsciously realized that his term of apprenticeship was drawing to a close, and that it had become a waste of time for him to bother about printing anything in any other type on any other paper or in any other way than his own.

Of Morris's studies at this period, W. R. Lethaby, himself a man of no mean record, has written that they were "not of the superficial look of things, but of their very elements and essence. When ... first producing textiles, Morris was a practical dyer; when it was tapestry, he wove the first pieces with his own hand; when he did illumination, he had to find a special vellum in Rome and have a special gold beaten; when he did printing, he had to explore papermaking, inkmaking, typecutting, and other dozen branches of the trade. His ornaments and the treatment of Burne-Jones's illustrations were based on his personal practice as a woodcutter. Morris was no mere 'designer' of type and ornament for books, but probably the most competent book-maker ever known. Indeed, it is a mistake to get into the habit of thinking of him as a 'designer'; he was a work-master—Morris the Maker!"

It was as a *maker of books* that he studied and experimented, not merely as printer or designer of type, or as both together. He was these and more. By the time he turned to making his own books—or even before that, by the time he entered upon actual preparation of the materials for his book-making—he possessed an intimate knowledge, and could appreciate the capabilities, of each and every material that goes into a book, either by itself or in relation to the others and their final embodiment in the book, was familiarly acquainted with each and all of the techniques which converge upon book-making, and

had acquired some considerable degree of working experience in each. No one material was taken singly and by itself, nor any one operation out of the entire process of making a book from beginning to end.

To use his own words, he studied book-printing, and "began printing books with the hope of producing some which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time they should be easy to read and should not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters. I have always been a great admirer of the calligraphy of the Middle Ages, and of the earlier printing which took its place. As to the fifteenth century books, I had noticed that they were always beautiful by force of the mere typography, even without the added ornament, with which many of them are so lavishly supplied. And it was the essence of my undertaking to produce books which it would be a pleasure to look upon as pieces of printing and arrangement of type. Looking at my adventure from this point of view, then, I found I had to consider chiefly the following things: the paper, the form of the type, the relative spacing of the letters, the words, and the lines, and lastly the position of the printed matter on the page."

So had he studied and experimented, and when the time came, so did he work.

V

PREPARATION

In describing Morris's work, while he was getting his materials and tools together and preparing for the production of printed books, we shall in the nature of things be driven to deal with one thing at a time, and can only try to bear in mind while doing so that he dealt with all things abreast. He subordinated no material to another, no operation to another, but each and all of these to the *book*. Though we shall have to start with his type, and go on to his paper, ink, etc., it is throughout necessary to remember that he did nothing of the kind.
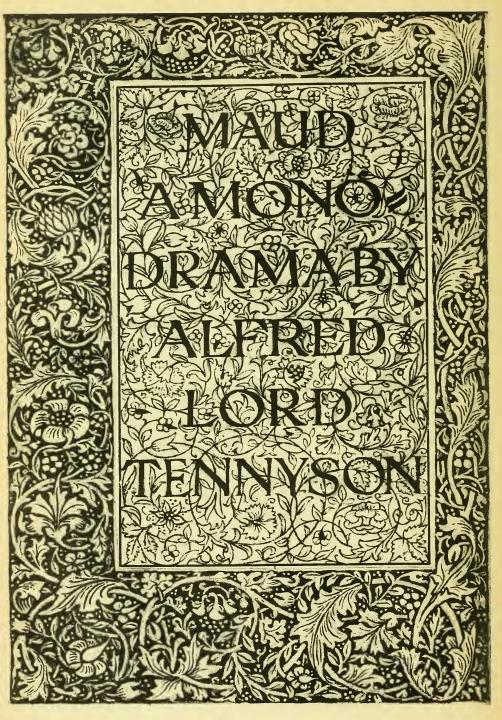
This is all the more necessary for the reason that some who quite honestly thought themselves to be following in his footsteps, or carrying out his teaching, have begun by designing a fine letter, and had then to seek, not always with success, for ink, paper, and the rest of it, with a view to the type and its individual beauties. Others have started with a fine paper, planning all else to do it justice. Examining his work in detail, and unwarned, it would only be too easy in these days to think of Morris's type, for example, in the abstract, comparing it with some ready-to-hand standard or some ideal of our own, without reference to all the other components of his books, or the conditions under which they were produced.

Nor, if it comes to that, should any one of his books be judged in isolation or for itself alone. Each in its turn was the sum of the material and skill at his disposal, and an essay towards realizing that which is never wholly to be realized: "for you know all art is compact of effort, of failure and of hope, and we cannot but think that somewhere perfection lies ahead, as we look anxiously for the better thing that is to come from the good."

MAUD
A MONO
DRAMA BY
ALFRED
LORD
TENNYSON

FROM WILLIAM MORRIS'S DRAWING FOR ENGRAVED TITLE PAGE
FOR KELMSCOTT PRESS 1893

Three types were designed, cast and used at the Kelmscott Press: the "Golden," "Troy" and "Chaucer," named from the books for which they were intended. A fourth was partially designed, but neither finished nor named. Of these, the "Golden" was an English or 14-point roman; the "Troy" was a Great Primer or 18-point black-letter; the "Chaucer" was a Pica or 12-point reduction of the "Troy." The uncompleted fount was a gothicized roman. We shall return to them presently.

For all three founts, the punches were cut "with great intelligence and skill," as Morris justly says, by Edward P. Prince, who was in constant consultation with Morris while at work on them. From what I can remember of the matter, it would seem that punchcutting in his hands, though the instruments used might be of greater precision, was essentially unchanged as a process from that followed through by Garamond or Howard. First came the cutting of the counter-punch—whence "counter" for the interior whites of the letters. Then the wrought-steel blank was screwed into a special vice, struck with the counter-punch, and the metal outside the face of the letter cut and filed away. When the face had been trued—in Howard's day this was done upon an oilstone, the punch being held upright in the angle of a special square—the punch was duly tempered to the proper degree of hardness, and was ready for the striking of the matrix. The dates of cutting were: "Golden," January-December 1890; "Troy," June-December 1891; "Chaucer," February-May 1892.

All casting was done at the Fann Street Foundry, then in the hands of Sir Charles Reed & Son, Talbot Baines Reed being Managing Director. As has already been noted, the casting was mechanical; this being the sole intrusion of the machine into the work of the Kelmscott Press, apart from sewing thread and that sort of thing.

As an example of the pitfalls that await an historian, I may cite a pencilled note in Talbot Baines Reed's own copy of the *Glittering Plain*, now in the Technical Library of the St. Bride Foundation Institute: "The types for this book were cast at the Fann Street Foundry from matrices produced from punches cut by French under Mr. Morris's personal inspection and from his designs. The letters were modelled chiefly on those

of Jenson and the early Venetian Roman printers." And the slip is all the more notable from the fact that a holograph letter from Morris himself to T. B. Reed has been pasted into the book by Reed, the postscript of which is: "Mr. Prince has done most of the lower-case letters of my black type."

After deciding upon a roman letter to begin with, and selecting Jenson as teacher, Morris began to work upon his type in December 1889. Miss May Morris tells "how the first type was designed." "Mr. Walker," she writes, "got his people to photograph upon an enlarged scale some pages from Aretino's *Historia fiorentina*, printed in Venice by Jacques Le Rouge in 1476, and pages of all the more important fifteenth century Roman types; these enlargements enabled Father to study the proportions and peculiarities of the letters. Having thoroughly absorbed these, so to speak, he started designing his own type on this big scale. When done, each letter was photographed down to the size the type was to be. Then he and Walker criticized them and brooded over them; then he worked on them again on the large scale until he got everything right. The point about all this is—though it may be scarcely necessary to dwell on a rather obvious thing—that while he worked on the letters on this large scale, he did not then, as is often done with drawings for mechanical reproduction, have the design reduced and think no more about it; it was considered on its own scale as well; and, indeed, when the design had passed into the expert and sympathetic hands of Mr. Prince and was cut, the impression—a smoked proof— was again considered, and the letter sometimes re-cut. My father used to go about with matchboxes containing these "smokes" of the type in his pockets, and sometimes as he sat and talked with us, he would draw one out, and thoughtfully eye the small scraps of paper inside. And some of the letters seemed to be diabolically inspired, and would not fall into line for a while, and then there were great consultations till the evil spirit was subdued."

While at work, he had Jenson's own models to refer to; indeed, he was rather adapting these to his purpose with aid from Jenson than imitating Jenson himself. With manuscripts for a starting-point, Jenson helped him on his way but did not furnish him with a goal to reach and be at rest. As he had

already done in so many other crafts, he was laying hold upon tradition, and "it is no longer tradition if it be servilely copied, without change, the token of life." Indeed, if his letter be compared with that of Jenson, it will be seen to be more Gothic in feeling; faintly, perhaps, but perceptibly so.

By mid-August, 1890, eleven punches had been cut to his satisfaction, and on August 27th he enclosed "a specimen (over-inked) of as far as we have gone at present" in a letter to F. S. Ellis. In October he wrote the same friend: "I have all the lower-case letters, and have been designing ornamental letters —rather good, I think." By the end of December, the whole fount had been cut and was being cast, except for the upper-case E and N. These missing letters were not ready until the beginning of February 1891, as may be seen by their absence from the trial-page of the *Glittering Plain*, pulled on January 31st. The complete fount consisted of eighty-one letters and sorts, including punctuation-marks, figures and tied letters. There were, of course, no "cock-ups" or "superior sorts"— miniature letters or figures above the line—nor any accents.

He exulted over the trial-page as a token of success, but was unsatisfied, and work had little more than begun to go smoothly at the Press when he set himself to designing the "Troy" fount. This was more or less based upon the types of Schoeffer, Zainer and Koburger. He was delayed by illness, but his hand was in, and when started he not only bettered his teachers but worked more quickly, taking half the time for the "Troy" that he had done for the "Golden."

When the resources of his press had revealed themselves, and he felt free to plan his greatest achievement, the glorious *Chaucer*, he was faced by the need for a smaller letter than either the "Troy" or the "Golden." As a black-letter would be more fitting than a roman for such a book, he decided upon reducing the "Troy," and so produced the "Chaucer." Each of these two later founts contained the same number of letters and sorts as the "Golden." One or two other sorts were added afterwards; *e.g.* a leaf to supersede the "blind ¶" as a paragraph mark.

Still unsated, if not unsatisfied, he made some experimental designs for a gothicized roman, based upon the first type of Sweynheym and Pannartz, but did not go far with it. He

admired their type greatly: the Press had grown into an enter-
prise, however, and had intensified the already tremendous
pressure of his daily work; then, though neither he nor anyone
else realized it in 1893, his physical powers were failing. Re-
peated attacks of what was called in those days the "Russian"
influenza, had undermined his magnificent constitution, and
laid him open to the insidious progress of the, as yet unsus-
pected, affection from which he died. Had it not been for all
this, the nameless fount would certainly have been completed,
and would probably have been followed by others; how many,
and of what kinds cannot even be guessed at now; all we can
be sure of is that his fertile strength would not have been
allowed to go idle.

In the course of his researches, the paper used by the earlier
printers and their successors had been as minutely studied as
their types, and while he was experimenting upon the *House of
the Wolfings* and the *Roots of the Mountains* he had exhaustively
acquainted himself with all the papers then at his disposal. Of
modern papers, those which most plausibly promised to be
permanent in material and colour had not the surface and tex-
ture he required, while those which came anywhere near to
giving him what he wanted in these respects were unable to
stand the tests to which he put them. There was nothing for
it, then, but making or causing to be made a paper of his
own.

The history of paper, as he regarded it, had run parallel to
that of type; as papermaking had grown into importance as a
trade, and the demand for paper increased, so the average of
quality had been lowered. And, again as with type, the lowest
point in the worth of book-paper had been reached in the first
half of the 19th century. John Murray complained of its
deterioration in 1824, and it went far lower than it was then,
when the commercialized application of science enabled paper-
makers to handle materials which could only be made use of
after the very life had been bleached out of them. There are
luxury-books, printed in the later 'sixties, that can be broken
across one's knee like a piece of rotten wood, and paper is now
being used which will go the same road at as great a pace.

It is not altogether a question of "hand-made" paper,
though paper that is to be permanent in substance and colour

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is exceptional, to say the least of it, when made by machine. The difference between paper *made throughout by hand* in the oldfashioned time-devouring careful way from linen rags, and paper made by machine—or even many so-called "hand-made" papers of to-day—is very closely analogous to that between a serge or tweed woven on a handloom from long-staple, unused, unmixed wool, and a commercial serge or tweed woven by machine from shoddy with an admixture of just enough new wool to hold it together. And even if the material were pure to begin with, it has been hurried through the processes of bleaching and making with the aid of chemicals, until the purity of its material is little more than a talking-point.

For paper such as Morris required there is but one possible material—unmixed linen rags—no other fibre in the world being aught but a substitute. The longer and finer the fibres, and the more complete their felting while wet, the stronger will be the sheet of paper when dry. But the material is by no means all; time and care must be given to every stage of its handling: it must be thoroughly fermented, thoroughly boiled and pulped, untouched by a chemical bleach, lifted slowly and carefully by hand, sheet after sheet, by a skilled and unhustled workman, employing a mould in which the wires have not been woven with the monotonous regularity that gives its uninteresting appearance to so much of the modern "hand-made" paper; and then it must be very gradually dried, without artificial heat. In this connexion, as in all others, a desire for speed is the enemy of true efficiency. Not that Morris believed in taking things too easily, of course; here, as always, it is the *work* and its welfare which counted for him: the time spent upon it should be fully enough, but not more than enough, to ensure its well-doing.

Another commercial demand—the demand for mechanical uniformity and a superficial appearance of perfection in the product—is all out as mischievous as that for speed. Pulp which is lifted by hand has not and cannot have the uniform thickness or dead regularity of surface—at the cost of homogeneity in substance—obtainable in that which has been spread by machine. But this is not a defect when the paper is dealt with by hand, and printed upon with good ink. It is, indeed, far more of a virtue, for it allows of a play of light and

shade upon the page which gives it life, without any detriment whatever to the unsophisticated clearness of the type-impression.

After much searching, Morris concluded upon a Bolognese model of about 1473, Italian papers having been from the beginning what Fuller found them to be in the 17th century: "Venetian being neat, subtle and courtlike; the French being slender and slight; the Dutch thick, corpulent and gross, not to say sometimes also bibulous, sucking up the ink with the sponginess thereof." And he also found a papermaker after his own heart, the late Joseph Batchelor of Little Chart, near Ashford in Kent, whose mill he visited with Emery Walker, and convinced himself that Joseph Batchelor might be left to pursue his experiments alone, being fully as enthusiastic and thoroughgoing—where paper was concerned—as was Morris himself. After he had reached this point, as has been said, he never revisited the mill, though he kept up a written correspondence until 1895.

In a letter to Morris, dated January 26th, 1891, Joseph Batchelor says: "I am to-day sending five quires of paper marked S, and also 2½ quires marked H, and I wait your further instructions. . . . The paper no doubt will be quite usable and is Antique, but is not so like the Venetian you left with me as I wish, and as I intend if I make another lot. What I have made will take about a week to finish after I hear from you which you like best, S or H."

It will be noted that the model paper is here spoken of as being "Venetian"—another trap for an historian!—but this was only a use of the traditional name for a good Italian paper.

As to which of the two, S or H, was preferred there is no record, but both were used for the *Glittering Plain*, as the size proved to be unsuitable to the *Golden Legend*, which was intended to have been the first book produced.

Three papers altogether were made for Morris by Joseph Batchelor, no other paper than these being used for any of the Kelmscott Press books. Named from their watermarks, designed by Morris, they were known familiarly as the "Flower," the "Perch" and the "Apple." The flower was a conventionalized primrose; the perch had a leafy sprig in his mouth; and the apple was an apple. In each case, the distinguishing mark

stood between the initials W. M. The first deliveries of each, as invoiced from the Mill, were:

"Flower." February 12, 1891. 10 reams Antique Pott, 16"
         × 11", 12 lb. 480 sheets.
   „   April 22, 1891. 10 reams Antique Medium,
         16" × 22", 25 lb. 480 sheets.
"Perch." February 17, 1893. 1-16/20 reams Antique
         Perch, 16¾" × 23", 28 lb. 480 sheets.
"Apple." March 14, 1895. 25½ reams Apple Antique,
         18¼" × 12¾", 18 lb. 480 sheets.

One experimental paper tried at the Press, but made for Emery Walker years before, was much too hard to be usable. In order to see what could be done towards an absolutely pure and ideally made paper, it had been made from pure new linen rags without admixture of any kind, especial care being taken over the trituration of the rags, fermenting the pulp, and all the rest of it. The outcome was a paper of wonderful beauty, but with which nothing could be done. Hard and resilient as spring-steel, tough and translucent as horn, it was dangerous to handle when dry, its deckle-edge cutting like a razor, was unfoldable, and no amount of soaking would render it soft enough to be printed on.

As had been the case with Morris's fabrics, wallpapers, stained glass, and so on, the new papers quickly found imitators, not all of them over-scrupulous as to quality. On October 30th, 1895, Joseph Batchelor wrote Morris: "I find that other makers are imitating our Antique Handmade paper. For our protection, and as a means of giving my friends a guaranteed genuine article, I propose calling the paper the Kelmscott Handmade, subject, of course, to your approval. This does not apply to watermarking in any way, but to the wrapping and labelling of the paper." This proposal was at once and willingly agreed to, and the same class of paper was made for a good many customers with their own watermarks, but always under the style of "Kelmscott Handmade." The Kelmscott papers are still being made by Batchelor & Son, but with the firm's own watermarks.

After paper, vellum. As has been told in its place, large-paper copies became impossible after the *House of the Wolfings*, and a "superior edition" of the *Roots of the Mountains* had been
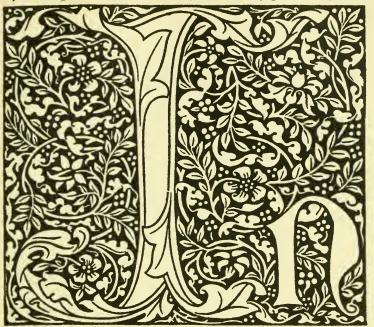
printed upon a specially made Whatman paper. No similar course could now be followed, as the Kelmscott Press books were to be printed on the best paper that the world could then show. Vellum was therefore the sole possible resource; and, besides, to print upon vellum would mean re-knotting another thread of the medieval tradition. With what remained over from the stock long ago laid in for calligraphy, there was enough whereon to print six copies of the *Glittering Plain*. When more was asked for, no more was to be had from Rome, the entire output having been firmly bespoken by the Vatican, and there was the *Golden Legend* to be provided for, to say nothing of lesser books. Excepting that one Italian maker, Morris could hear of nobody in any country who could or would supply the kind or quality of vellum he needed. He had almost concluded upon a direct appeal to the Pope, begging him to release a supply, on the ground that the *Golden Legend* was a book in which he ought to be interested, when one of his friends told him of a man who might be willing to try his hand upon turning out the kind of vellum he required. This was Henry Band, of Brentford in Middlesex, who already made binding-vellum, as well as parchment, drumheads and banjo-heads. To him went Morris in his usual way, and after a few trials and failures they met with success—too late for the *Golden Legend*, however. Specially made from carefully chosen skins of calves not yet six weeks old—after that age, their skins must go into the tanpit, becoming the raw material of gloves, boots, etc.—made specially thin, specially surfaced and not faked with white lead, the Kelmscott vellum was an exceedingly costly product. But this last was a detail that Morris cared nothing about, so long as the material answered the requirements of the work to be done.

Later on, when the growing needs of the Press outran the capabilities of the Brentford works, recourse was had to another firm, William J. Turney & Co. of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, to help out. "Kelmscott" and "Roman" vellums are still being made at Brentford, but the Stourbridge concern "gave up the manufacture many years ago, although the demand for vellum still exists."

His experience as a dyer had prepared Morris for a fair amount of trouble with his ink, but he met with far more than

INCIPIT LEGENDA YPERMIS

IN GRECE WHYLOM WEREN brethren two,
Of whiche that oon was called Danao,
That many a sone hath of his body wonne,
As swiche false lovers ofte conne.
Among his sones alle ther was oon
That aldermost he lovede of everichoon.
And whan this child was born, this Danao
Shoop him a name, and called him Lino.
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as fals as ever him liste,
And many a doghter gat he in his lyve;
Of which he gat upon his righte wyve
A doghter dere, and dide her for to calle
Ypermistra, yongest of hem alle;
The whiche child, of her nativitee,

even he had anticipated. Indeed, his ink was more trouble-
some than anything else, "as one might have known, seeing
that those damned chemists have a freer hand with it!" In all
matters of art, he held that the chemist had wrought infinite
mischief, without having a single gain to his credit; and if this
belief had not been warranted by previous experience, it most
certainly was justified by what happened now. After endless
trials, two inks—one English and one American—were found,
and it looked for a while as though these might answer, though
the English one had an undertone of red and the American
an undertone of blue. And the attitude of all the English
and American makers appeared to be: "Take it or leave it;
what's good enough for others is good enough for you!" It
was not until Jaenecke of Hanover came forward, however,
and offered an ink said to be made of the old-fashioned pure
materials that his troubles were over.

None of the others could understand that linseed oil was
indispensable, any other being a cheap and harmful substitute;
that "science" with its chemicals might simulate but could
not produce the same organic changes in the oil as those which
went on while it slowly matured in keeping; that after it had
been thoroughly matured, and then reduced by boiling to the
proper consistency, chemicals might free it from grease more
effectively than the rule-of-thumb treatment of pre-"scientific"
times with stale bread and raw onions, but "freed" it while
doing so of much else; that after the turpentine, boiled separ-
ately until, on cooling it on paper, it broke sharply and without
falling into powder, had been mixed with the boiled oil while
both were still warm, no chemical treatment or addition of this
or that would atone for a shortening of the six months' ripen-
ing the mixture must undergo, at the least, before being boiled
up again; that no other pigment than an organic lampblack,
animal for choice, must enter into the ink, depth and tone of
colour being regulated by the quantity of lampblack and by
nothing else; and, finally, that the lampblack must be ground
into the mixture of oil and turpentine until absolutely impalp-
able. To men who were accustomed to taking a chemical-
ized short-cut or the use of a chemicalized substitute wher-
ever that was possible, and could reckon upon disposing
of their product by the ton, such a demand appeared to be

a mad one, especially on the part of a relatively negligible buyer.

Jaenecke stepped in where they did not care to tread, and Morris, though he had cause to deplore and fear the influence that Germany had exerted and was then exerting upon English art, thought and letters, was in this instance compelled to rely upon the methodical thoroughness and artistic probity of a German manufacturer. It is true that Jaenecke was a fellow-socialist, but I cannot remember whether Morris knew this or no. The ink was good in colour, and proved to be stable when tested; if it showed any trace at all of weakening under months of daylight, it betrayed no unpleasing undertone. It was of the proper consistency; when a pinch of it was taken and the finger and thumb parted, it might be drawn out into a thread of over an inch long; yet it was thin enough to adhere to the paper without an undue pull upon its surface or an undue drag upon the type; and it never worked foul, clogging the type or dirtying the impression. That in the average press-room of those days—or in these?—a little soft soap would soon have got into it is another matter altogether; quickness of working was not asked for at the Kelmscott Press.

With all its merits, Morris did not feel altogether satisfied with it; he had had no opportunity of examining its ingredients or supervising its manufacture. There was nobody within reach to work with, and his days were much too thronged to allow of a lengthy trip to Germany, or he would assuredly have taken up the study and practice of inkmaking with all the intensity and industry he had given in their time to the mastery of dyes and dyeing. But his days were already overfilled, and his utmost energies taxed, by work to which he had committed himself, and he was forced for the time to content himself with testing the colour and stability of the ink by the severest means at his command. The hand of death fell on him before he could find a chance of doing more.

He was a born decorator, and the decorations of his books were an integral part of their original conception; they were *decorations* in the truest and fullest meaning of the word, organically harmonious parts of a designed page, and never extraneous thereto, added or *appliqués* as "beautification." He could not have resisted the temptation to enrich his books with

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ornament, or anything else that he made, for his mind and hand were irresistibly architectural in all things, and unceasingly fertile so long as he was awake. As chairman of a meeting, his notes of the discussion were unconsciously covered with sketches of flowers or fantastic scraps of design; and the top of a white-wood table, which used to stand on the platform of the meeting-hall attached to his house at Hammersmith, was filled from end to end and corner to corner with striking hints of beauty or grotesquerie that were, in their own way, his comments on what was being said.

"I have watched Mr. Morris designing the black and white borders for his books," writes W. R. Lethaby. "He would have two saucers, one of Indian ink, the other of Chinese white. Then, making the slightest indications of the main stems of the pattern he had in mind, with pencil, he would begin at once his finished final ornament by covering a length of ground with one brush and painting the pattern with the other. If a part did not satisfy him, the other brush covered it up again, and again he set to to put in his finished ornament. This procedure opens up another idea of his, that a given piece of work was best done once for all, and that all making of elaborate cartoons, and then accurately copying into a clear finished drawing, was a mistake. There was not only a loss of vitality which would come by the interposition of more or less mechanical work, but a drawing would not come right a second time, and would always to his eye bear the impress of a copy instead of a thing self-springing under his hand. It is difficult to realize the extent to which he felt this, but . . . he seemed to have the idea that a harmonious piece of work needed to be the result of one flow of mind; like a bronze casting in which all kinds of patching and adding are blemishes. . . . The actual drawing with the brush was an agreeable sensation to him; the forms were led along and bent over and rounded at the edges with definite pleasure; they were *stroked* into place, as it were, with a sensation like that of smoothing a cat . . . thus he kept alive every part of his work by growing the pattern, as I have said, bit by bit, solving the turns and twists as he came to them. It was to express this sensuous pleasure that he used to say that all good designing was felt in the stomach."

Of titlepages, borders, decorative initials and marginal

ornaments, he designed a total of no less than six hundred and forty-four in little more than six years. In his earlier books, of course, he had to make do with a smaller and less varied selection than he had at his disposal before the end. This was made matter of complaint at the time by ill-informed critics, who took the repetition of a design for a measure of economy, not allowing for the fact that his enterprise was an experimental one and not in the least a commercial speculation, or knowing that no single penny was ever charged against the Press or any book printed thereat for any of Morris's own designs. For other people's work he paid, and paid well, but counted in his own as part of the fun. Another silly complaint was that the decorations did not "fit the text," or, in other words, were not symbolic of its meaning; to this he would have retorted, as he did when one of his romances was taken for an allegory, that when he had anything to say, he said it in so many words and plainly; that his decorations were not intended to be illustrative or emblematic, but exactly decorations and no more.

He started with one hand-press, an Albion, to which two others and a proving-press were added later on. Except for the change to iron from wood, and the substitution of levers for the screw, this press was essentially similar to Caxton's; indeed, at the end of an hour or so, Caxton would have been comfortably at home with the Press as a whole. As has been said, Morris would have been ready to install a machine if it would have done what he wanted, which it would not, or fitted into his enterprise. No machine then existing, however, could have dealt with his paper and ink in the manner he desired; and it is to be doubted whether there be one to-day. Then, even upon the point of cost, advantage lay on the side of the hand-press. Though the machine be cheaper for long runs, for two or three hundred copies it is not, even when its far greater prime cost and interest thereon are left out of account. When each and every sheet is pulled with as much care as an etching, being then tried over for the minutest fault, and replaced if it be in the least defective, the machine is yet further handicapped. On the hand-press, one, two, or five sheets may be pulled at the same expense as though they were part of a thousand, which is very far from being the case with a machine.

The type was inked with rollers, not pelt-balls, as it would have been if Morris were merely imitating old methods. Rollers distribute the ink more evenly and quickly than pelt-balls did, even good sticky ink, over heavy type and strong-lined woodcuts. Then, with rollers, there is less risk of "monks" and "friars"—patches on which the ink is too dark or too light for the rest of the page—though, as the Kelmscott pressmen were in the front rank of their craft, this risk would not have been a great one in any case.

Upon another point, that of the impression, there is an irreconcilable difference between admirers of machine-work and those who hold with Morris in his love of and belief in the human hand, armed with the simplest possible tools. Printing by hand on the oldfashioned hand-press, upon damped paper which rests upon a relatively soft bed, each character leaves a dent in the paper which ought to be only just perceptible when the paper has dried again. To get rid of this denting, which did not suit his distorted type, shiny paper and varnish-laden ink, Bodoni dried his printed sheets between heated copper plates under pressure. The machine, with its hard bed, leaves an impression *on* the surface of the paper but no depression *in* the paper, and this has come to be taken as an added beauty, while a favourite word of condemnation for the older method is to speak of its "embossing" the page.

"Witness has been borne against Morris," wrote Frank Colebrook in the *Printing Times*, "in regard to what is called the embossing of the back of the page, an evidence that the other side of the page we are reading is also printed upon. The effect is displeasing to most eyes, and it detracts from the vividness of the letter which is being read, to the degree to which it detracts from the whiteness of the intervening space between the words. I don't think this concomitant of the hand-press, with its enormous vertical pressure, is really gratifying to Morris, however indulgently he may look upon it for its reminiscences of old-world books. It is simply the lesser of two evils. If a perfect, dense, deep black is not to be obtained without the drawback of the embossing of the back of the page, well, on the balancing of advantages, he chooses to have the more legible letter. He, indeed, procures so deep a black that it can afford the sacrifice of a little white in the contrasting

spacing. . . . A good deal, and perhaps too much, has been said about this back embossing by critics of the Kelmscott. They should put aside any idea that it appears in Morris's books simply because he finds it in other books. If he were an imitator for imitation's sake, he would copy the catchwords of old volumes and the old long form of the small s. He adopts neither of these." This is the commonsense view of a practical up-to-date printer.

To talk of "embossing" at all, of course, is misleading, to say the least of it; every decent pressman does his best to minimize the inevitable denting. But, as Morris so often pointed out in other connexions, trying for the utmost attainable perfection in handwork results in something very different indeed from attaining mathematical precision by means of a machine; in the one, there is human effort, *life*; in the other, there is long-distance calculation and the interposition of a feelingless metallic efficiency between the hand and its work, which in matters of art means *death*.

I have spoken of the difference between machine-worshippers and believers in the human hand as an irreconcilable one; and irreconcilable it is until the mechanically minded realize that, while there is room for them and to spare in the world of material necessities, there is none for them in the world of art, where the human brain and hand attempt an unattainable perfection, and find their joy in the attempt. It is, after all, the difference between those who play football for the sake of the game and those who play it for the sake of the win; between those who play bridge as an intellectual stimulant and recreation and those who play it with a sordid eye upon the stakes. To the mechanically minded, irregularity in thickness of paper and relative inequalities of surface in the printed page are uncondonable defects; to Morris and his like they are signs of living effort, and therefore easily to be pardoned and put up with, even if they are not to be sought for and admired.

It is, after all, the old quarrel between the Gothic and the Renaissance. To those who condemn the mechanical shortcomings, as they hold them to be, of Morris's printing, the work of the French, English and Italian Primitives, the glorious beauties of Santa Sophia and the whole Byzantine tradition, the spirited strivings of pre-Pheidian Greek sculpture, or those

of the great builders of the 13th and 14th centuries, would necessarily appear to be barbarous, puerile, inept.

And it is to be remembered that the inevitable denting was in Morris's mind when he designed his type, as it was in that of Caslon. Print from Caslon's type upon modern paper with a modern press, contrast the effect with that of the same type in Caslon's own specimen-sheets, and the loss is seen to be enormous. So, too, with Morris's "Golden," and still more with his "Troy" or "Chaucer," when treated in any other way than the Kelmscott Press way.

This brings me to the question of reproductions. Even the best conceivable reproduction does an injustice to its original, and is to be put up with in the absence of the original; to be taken as an appetizer towards the study of that original, and not as a substitute for it. To reproduce a Morris page, or any other Morris design of any kind, in the true sense of the word *reproduce*, is, indeed, impossible in the absence of identical material and an identical method of handling it. Less yet is it possible to imitate them to advantage. They are to be treated as Morris himself treated the work of his predecessors, admired and loved for their own sake, and studied for that which may be learned from them, but not imitated. Imitation is, in any case, unintelligent, the recourse of none but the cowardly in art or the unscrupulous in commerce, anxious to be in the fashion or follow the market.
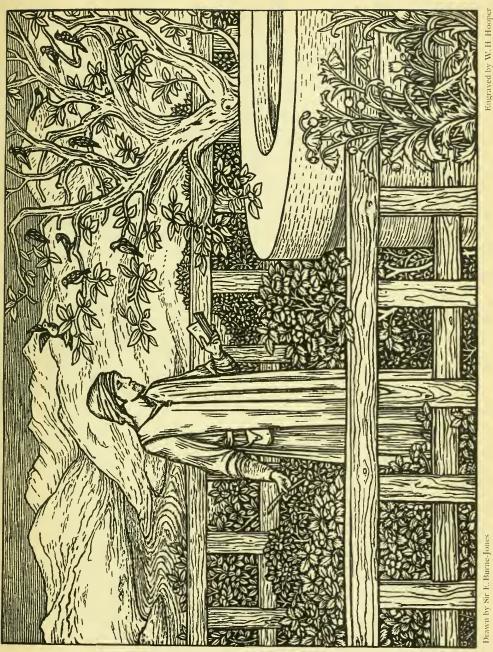
THE MASTER-PRINTER

Now that nearly thirty years have gone by since the Kelmscott Press ended its work and passed into history, that its reputation has grown higher with time, and its importance more and more widely recognized, the apparent insignificance of its beginnings can only be realized with an effort, and it seems incredible that its rapid growth and ultimate repute should have been wholly unforeseen.

Yet, when it first opened its door, the front-door of a tiny cottage, nobody—and, least of all, its founder—anticipated any such development as that which led, in the seven years of its activity, to the production of no less than fifty-two works in sixty-six volumes, one of them twice printed, ranging in size and moment from the mighty *Chaucer* down to the dainty little *Gothic Architecture*, counting in all up to 18,234 copies, and representing a turnover of more than £50,000. Nor did Morris dream that what he was doing would at once and for ever affect the printing of books throughout the civilized world; that within a year he would be hailed as the Master-Printer of his age by Theodore de Vinne and other authorities; that State printing-offices, like those of Portugal and Russia, were to print special volumes in his honour; or that the books to be printed by him were henceforth to be fought for in the auction-room, and held in high esteem among the choicer treasures of great libraries. He foresaw nothing of all this, and thought of his "adventure" as an experiment in book-making for the mere sake of seeing what could be done.

His original idea, it will be remembered, had been to have

Drawn by Sir E. Burne-Jones   Engraved by W. H. Hooper

CHAUCER AND THE BIRDS. FROM THE FIRST PAGE OF CHAUCER'S WORKS

no more than a composing-room of his own, all press-work to be done at Emery Walker's offices in Clifford's Inn. As his knowledge of printing grew, however, and his practical interest in its working details deepened, he began to see that there were far too many technical risks and difficulties involved in such a plan; and that, in addition to these, there was the fact that printing at a distance from his home would make it much harder for him to watch over the work as it proceeded.

On January 12th, 1891, therefore, his type and paper being nearly ready for delivery, a cottage was taken at No. 16 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, a few doors eastward of his residence. The necessary furniture and fittings had been ordered beforehand, and the Kelmscott Press came into being. That it should be thus named was inevitable; whatever came near to Morris's heart must be named after Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade on the Upper Thames, of which he had written: "It has come to be the type of the pleasant places of earth, and of the homes of harmless, simple people not overburdened with the intricacies of life; and, as others love the race of man through their lovers or their children, so I love the Earth through that small space of it."

He had offered a partnership in the new undertaking to Emery Walker, who, with his usual modest self-effacement, declined what he felt as an honour. From beginning to end, however, he acted as and virtually was a partner in all but name, taking his full share in the labours, cares and anxieties involved, as well as in the immaterial dividends that were paid in pleasure and the credit for good work well performed.

One upstairs room of the cottage was fitted with racks, cases, imposing-stone, etc.; another housed the single press, bought secondhand; the rooms on the ground-floor were utilized for stores. William Bowden, a recently retired master-printer of the old school, who had printed *News from Nowhere* for Reeves & Turner, was to have been the entire staff, acting as compositor and pressman by turns. It was made evident, even from the start, however, that there was too much work in sight for one pair of hands, and he was joined a week or two later by his daughter, Mrs. Pine. William Henry Bowden occasionally dropped in to help his father, and was regularly added to the staff on February 18. Before March was out,

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another addition was made, a pressman named Giles, who left when the first book was finished.

"One of my earliest recollections of William Morris," says W. H. Bowden, "is of the starting of the Press. When the type came in from the founders, he was very anxious to help lay it in the cases; but not having served his time to the business, more often than not put the type into the wrong box. It was very amusing to hear him saying to himself: 'There, bother it; in the wrong box again!' But he was perfectly good-humoured, and presently ran off and came back, bustling up the path— and in my mind's eye I can see him now—without a hat, and with a bottle of wine under each arm, with which to drink the health of the Kelmscott Press. And, without ostentation, I think I may say that there must have been considerable virtue in that wine if the Kelmscott Press is to be judged by its works, which in so short a time established such a world-wide repu- tation!"

Writing to a friend at the time, after telling him the good news that the Press had made a start, and rejoicing thereat, Morris in the next breath confesses to an involuntary recoil that is illuminative of the man: "When I saw my two men at work on the press yesterday, with their sticky printer's ink, I couldn't help lamenting the simplicity of the scribe and his desk, and his black ink and blue and red ink, and I almost felt ashamed of my press after all!"

Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend* was to have been the first book printed, and the "Golden" type had been de- signed for it, but when the first lot of paper was delivered it was found to be too small for the purpose. Only two pages, out of over a thousand, could be printed at a time, and Morris, im- patiently desirous of handling a finished book from his own press, resolved to put a smaller book in hand to go on with. The *Story of the Glittering Plain*, which had appeared in Nos. 81/84 of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, but had not yet been published in book form, was available and of the required length. After a slight revision, this began to be set up at once.

Some decorated initials had already been designed for the *Golden Legend* by Morris, and had been engraved by George F. Campfield, an old friend of his, a pupil of Ruskin at the Working Man's College, and the first employé to enter the

service of Morris, Faulkner, Marshall & Co. These, though rather large for the page of the smaller book, would do to go on with, but a new border was necessary. This was at once designed by Morris, and engraved by W. H. Hooper, and on January 31st a trial-page was pulled amid great excitement. As has already been noted, the upper-case E and N had not yet been received from the founders, and do not appear in this page. The lower-case g was found to be unsatisfactory, and was at once discarded and replaced.

William Harcourt Hooper, who thus came into connexion with the Press, was one of the last of the great wood-engravers who were at work before any photographic or other mechanical method of reproduction had yet been dreamed of. They took to and were trained for wood-engraving as a trade, but for such of them as were artists it became an art; their starting-point and training were those of the craftsman, and they were consequently free from the tendency to mannered self-assertion which is the besetting sin of wood-engravers nowadays, when the craft of wood-engraving having been killed out as a craft, they must of necessity and in their own despite be go-to-ists to some extent. In the earlier part of Hooper's career, he had engraved Sir John Gilbert's drawings for the *London Journal*, and from 1850 onwards those of Tenniel, Fred Walker, Leech, du Maurier, Keene, Millais, Leighton and others for the *Illustrated London News* and for *Punch*. He had been living in comfortable retirement for some years, but could not resist the lure of exercising his art once more upon such tempting material. He now offered his help, and from this time until the *Chaucer* had been completed had as much as he could do to keep up with an increasing demand upon his willing services. It is a question as to whether he or Morris were the more fortunate in their conjunction. Without Hooper, the work of Morris and Burne-Jones would not have been done the justice it deserved and received. Without his association with the Kelmscott Press, Hooper and his earlier work might by now have been forgotten.

Twenty copies of the *Glittering Plain* were to have been printed for distribution among Morris's personal friends. There was as yet no thought of offering any for sale, nor did Morris desire that any public notice be taken of what he still

regarded as a private and personal experiment, an "adventure" of which the success or failure from his point of view was necessarily indeterminate as yet. Rumours with regard to the new press had begun to get about, however, and on February 21st, the *Athenæum* announced that: "Mr. William Morris is getting his press into working order. The printing of the *Golden Legend* will be preceded by that of . . . the *Glittering Plain*. A very limited number will be printed as the first issue of the Kelmscott Press, by which name Mr. Morris calls his new enterprise." This gave rise, to Morris's outspoken annoyance, to a great number of inquiries and many pressing requests that copies be made available for purchase. After much heartburning, and with a certain amount of misgiving, he finally decided to print what then seemed to him the very large number of two hundred copies; twenty, as before, for his friends, and a hundred-and-eighty for sale through his regular publishers, Reeves & Turner. His misgivings were not in the least with regard to the possibility of selling so many copies, which was already assured, but as to whether the Press was as yet sufficiently well organized and prepared to do the work as he wanted it done, and especially as to whether a pressman could print the same sheet so many times over at a stretch without succumbing to the monotony of his task, and failing to exercise the same scrupulous and minute care throughout. Besides, the initials having been designed for a larger page, he could not at once reconcile himself to their use for a smaller one. However, all his objections were overcome; the first sheet went to press on March 2nd, and thenceforward the work went steadily on.

If Morris had resented the *Athenæum's* first notice of the Press, his annoyance may be imagined when the same paper, in its issue of April 4th, published a series of paragraphs, founded upon what he had regarded as a frank and confidential talk with a friend, in which the Press and his projects in connexion therewith were fully described. "The *Glittering Plain*," said the *Athenæum*, "will be published by Messrs. Reeves & Turner at a net price. Only two hundred copies will be struck off, of which 180 will be for sale, and four or five copies on vellum." The immediate effect of this announcement was that Reeves & Turner were overwhelmed with orders and inquiries, and that the 180 copies on paper were sold out within

the next few days, as well as two of those upon vellum. This in spite of the fact that no price had been stated. No price, indeed, had yet been fixed.

Now that it had to be done, the price for paper copies was fixed at two guineas, and that for vellum copies at fifteen guineas. These prices covered little more than the actual cost of the sold copies, after an exceedingly moderate allowance had been made for their proportionate share of overhead expenses. Depreciation of plant was not reckoned, nor the cost of gift copies; for Morris, as the Press was his own private affair, an experimental venture entered upon for the sake of turning out books worth looking at, and not for pecuniary profit, these were matters which concerned him alone, to be paid for out of his own pocket. Later on, when the Press had grown too big to be thus treated, and the book-loving public had shown that it was more than ready to pay fair prices for its products, the friends and assistants who took charge of the business side of things looked out against his losing money, seeing no reason for his being out-of-pocket in addition to giving away his personal work—and such work!—for nothing.

Anonymous attacks began to be made on him almost at once, nevertheless, for "preaching Socialism and going away to prepare books which none but the rich could buy." Apart altogether from the fact that, so soon as the Press had been got into running order, books were printed and sold at prices which brought them well within the reach of others than "the rich," it must again be emphasized that Morris founded his Press as a personal experiment, in order to see what could be done *at his own expense* in the way of producing a decent book, and that he had never contemplated the sale of any book whatever, at any price, until forced to do so by finding that there was a real and widespread demand for his books, and that people were prepared to pay for them. Then, being a sensible man—and, as he was proud of being, not only a manufacturer but a shopkeeper in the true medieval way; a "poetic upholsterer," as Lord Grimthorpe dubbed him, to his delight—he, quite naturally, did not snap his fingers at the proffered assistance towards making his experiment a success.

Here are the actual prices charged from first to last: one book at £20; one at £9, 9s.; two at £6, 6s.; four at £5, 5s.; one

at £4, 4s.; two at £3, 3s.; fifteen at £2, 2s.; fifteen at 30s.; four at 25s.; four at 21s.; three at 15s.; one at 12s.; four at 10s.; four at 7s. 6d.; and one at 2s. 6d.

As the editor of the *Printing Times*, Frank Colebrook, a practical and experienced commercial printer, pointed out, Morris was animated by the same motives in preaching Socialism and in founding the Press: "He sets up his press, not really to make money, whether out of the rich or out of the poor, but to produce a book as beautiful as he can make it. When he has paid a high price for his paper ... when he has used black ink at about 10s. a pound; when he has designed his three types and had them cut; when he has paid fair wages to his workmen, from whom he does not require a longer week than forty-six-and-a-half hours—nor, indeed, bind them down to any specified time—he is not able to sell the product of all this for a less sum. And what a service he renders to workmen everywhere in demonstrating that people will lavish money to buy books upon which master-printers and workmen have lavished care!" And he sarcastically comments: "This dreamer of dreams positively trades and makes money; lavishes it on the needy, no doubt; but the fact remains, he makes money, while the fitness of things demands that from the moment of his start in business, he, the poet, shall be borne softly and serenely away towards the vast waters of the Insolvent Sea! His success is a paradox, almost an impertinence. Commonsense inclines to resent it!"

"It has frequently been urged against the Kelmscott Press that its usefulness as the pioneer of a new movement has been largely impaired by the high charges Morris made for his books," A. L. Cotton said in the *Contemporary Review*. "The fact is, of course, that Morris made no pretence of publishing cheap books, and the sale did no more than compensate him for the heavy expenditure of time and money which he incurred. Paper, ink, binding were the best procurable, to say nothing of the ornaments and decorations, and he could hardly have charged a smaller sum for his volumes than he actually did."

According to the colophon, the *Glittering Plain* was finished on April 4th, but this was naturally the date on which the last forme was locked up; the last sheet had still to be printed,

and the book to be bound; the actual date of publication was May 8th. The average interval between colophon-date and publication-date was, in the case of octavos, about a month; in that of larger books, longer. In the case of the *Dream of John Ball* (May 13th-September 24th), it was the frontispiece by Burne-Jones which delayed matters; this had to be re-drawn under the artist's direction from that prefixed to the first edition, Morris's border designed for it, both of these engraved, and the blocks printed from, after the body of the book was off the press. Other cases of delay were: *News from Nowhere* (November 22nd, 1892-March 24th, 1893), kept back for frontispiece, from drawing by C. M. Gere, with border by Morris, depicting the old manor-house on the Upper Thames after which the Press was named; the *Wood beyond the World* (May 30th-October 16th, 1894), which also had to wait for its frontispiece; and the *Well at the World's End* (March 2nd-June 4th, 1896), the last sheet of which had to stand by until a press was available, two being fully occupied upon the *Chaucer* and a third upon the *Earthly Paradise*.

The *Well at the World's End*, by the way, was longer in hand than any other book, even the *Chaucer*, being "in the press" for over three years. Trial-pages, including one in a single column, were set up and pulled in September 1892, and the first forme went to press on the 16th of the following December. The ordinary edition was then being printed for Longmans at the Chiswick Press, and the Kelmscott Press edition was set up from the sheets of this, which was ready for publication in 1894, though not actually published until October 1896, being held back in order that the Kelmscott Press edition might be the first. How to account for the length of time during which the *Well at the World's End* was in the press is not easy after so many years, but part of it was due to the fact that, according to the original scheme, A. J. Gaskin was to have illustrated the book, and when this idea had been abandoned, Burne-Jones's four designs were long in hand. Then, many other books were in hand, and Morris was designing a profusion of ornaments for them, doing a good deal of translation, writing his *Water of the Wondrous Isles*, and was not idle in other ways. His "tidymindedness," already referred to, had probably something to do with it; the book had been

written, and to that extent was gone from the forefront of his mind; new tasks encroached upon his attention as they came up, one after another—the *Chaucer* more than all. Until the very end, each and every book in its turn was a high adventure, offering new problems and therefore a renewed excitement, and a glance at the list of books printed will serve to show that there was no lack of "adventures" between 1892 and 1896.
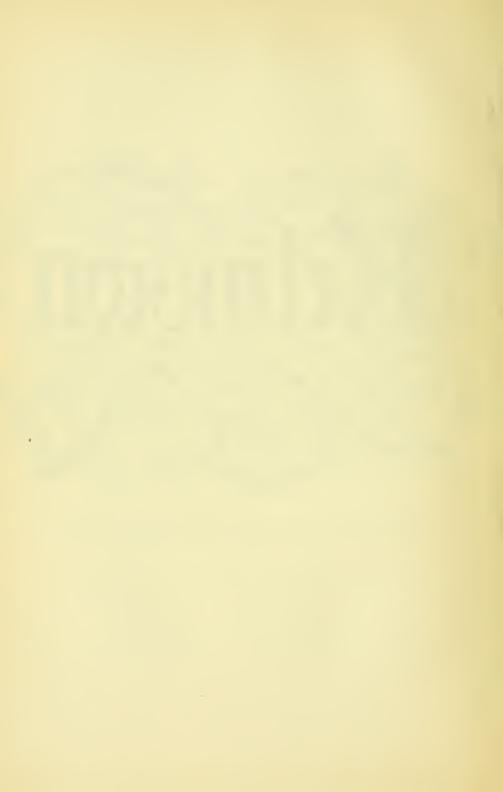
At some time during March 1891 a trial-page of the *Golden Legend* was set up, pulled and approved, and the book was put in hand. In April came the first delivery of the larger size of the "Flower" paper, and it was possible to send the first sheet to press. Vellum of the proper size and in sufficient quantity was not yet available, and the *Golden Legend* is the only important book printed at the Press of which there are no copies on vellum. Before the *Golden Legend* was finished, and in time for the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, a supply of the necessary vellum was being furnished by Henry Band. By May 11th, fifty pages of the *Golden Legend* were in type, and the first sheet had been printed. But for an accident, it would have been printed sooner. Morris went into the Press one morning, towards the end of April, and found his unhappy staff in the depths of despair; a deal slab, overladen with page-galleys, had collapsed, and the outcome of many days of labour had gone into "pye." As W. H. Bowden told the story: "Morris is as serene as ever. 'Oh, then, this is what you call pye?' he exclaims. If there must be pye at the Kelmscott Press, he seems interested and almost pleased to see it; to be in at the death. It is all in the day's work. 'Ah, well,' he says, 'we must put it straight. I came in to tell you that you must take a holiday on May 1st, Labour Day.' And with that he turns on his heel and away." The accident, be it noted, was due to faulty material and not carelessness, or "serene" would hardly have been the word that fitted.

No sooner was the *Glittering Plain* all up than *Poems by the Way* was put in hand. Upon this and the *Golden Legend*, the three compositors were fully occupied until the end of May, when the Press moved to a new abode.

On May 8th, the *Glittering Plain*, the first book to be printed at the Kelmscott Press, and the only book to be wholly printed at No. 16 Upper Mall, made its public appearance.

COLOPHON FOR QUARTO BOOKS OF THE KELMSCOTT PRESS

Booklovers were delighted with it, not only for its own sake but as a herald of better things to come. Morris himself was less pleased with it than might have been expected; as an experiment he had learnt much from its making, and there was a thrill in handling his first completed book, but he saw and felt the points upon which it fell short of his ideal far more keenly than those upon which it might be called a success.

Two things, at least, had now been proven by experience: that a good pressman might be trusted to retain the freshness of his interest over the pulling of three hundred copies; and that there was what somebody called at the time a "ready-made Morris public" for at least that number. Three hundred copies was the number fixed upon for *Poems by the Way*, and became the standard number for an average book, only being exceeded in special cases.

Another thing that had come to be obvious was that a larger staff and increased accommodation must at once be provided, if work on the *Golden Legend* were to proceed at a reasonable rate, and especially if a succession of smaller books were to be produced while it was in progress. Then, Morris's appetite had been whetted, and he was dreaming of bigger things, designing his "Troy" type, having the "copy" prepared for Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, so that it should be ready as soon as the type was available, and already talking of a *Chaucer*. The original cottage was given up, therefore, and larger premises taken at No. 14 Upper Mall, next door to it. "Sussex Cottage," the new home of the Press, and that in which the main part of its work was to be done, was half of a large old family-mansion, partitioned off, of which the other half, "Sussex House," was occupied by the photo-engraving works of Walker & Boutall. The whole mansion, re-united, is now in the hands of Emery Walker, Limited. No. 16 reverted to its original use as a private dwelling, and it is thus occupied at the time of writing.

William Bowden definitively retired when the move was made. W. H. Bowden became overseer, and several new compositors were engaged; Thomas Binning, late of the *Commonweal*, being among them. Binning was elected father of the chapel; he was a staunch trade-unionist, and it was probably due to him that the London Society of Compositors

approached Morris, asking him to unionize the Press, in spite of the fact that it was outside the Union district, and that no obligation lay upon him to do so. His reply was to the effect that the Press was not a commercial enterprise, that he already paid higher wages for shorter hours than those recognized by the Union, that the matter was one for his men to settle as they chose, and that he would bring no pressure to bear upon them either in favour of the proposal or against it. When the Union authorities approached the men, the latter discussed the whole question, in chapel assembled, and agreed to go in as a "shop" but only as a "shop." That is to say, there must be no discrimination against non-union men, who must go in on the same terms as the others who were already members, and also that Mrs. Pine must be enrolled with all the rest. No woman had ever yet been admitted to the Union, and its authorities objected to setting up a precedent on the point. The men stuck to their guns, however, and carried the day. Mrs. Pine duly became the first woman-member of the L.S.C., though she did not long enjoy the honour, as she followed her father into retirement soon afterwards, but she had made her name historic and opened the way for others.

Poems by the Way went to press during the following month, and the last forme was locked up on September 24th, the book being published on October 20th. It was the first book to be finished at No. 14, and the first printed in black and red. The *Golden Legend*, of which the first volume was finished on October 1st, was printed entirely in black, as the *Glittering Plain* had been, and as the following were to be: *The Nature of Gothic*, *Biblia Innocentium*, the *Life of Wolsey*, and the first (but only the first) volume of Shelley's *Poems*. Two books only were printed in three colours—black, red and blue— *Laudes B.V.M.* and *Love is Enough*. All others were printed in black and red. Wilfrid Blunt's *Love Lyrics and Songs of Proteus* has the initials in red, at Blunt's express request, but the experiment was not repeated, as Morris did not care for the effect produced.

A second press was bought in November, as work on the *Golden Legend* was dragging along, and books were beginning to get in one another's way. There were so many that Morris wanted to put in hand by now, and he could not bear that work

should be hurried. W. H. Bowden describes his attitude towards the work, as it was then and all the way through, from the standpoint of an employé: "What sort of man was Morris to work with? Well, if all employers were like him, we should hear of no more troubles between employers and employed! He was generous and fair, and not indifferent to the feelings and welfare of those who served him. His idea was that a man should not be a working-man as we understand the term, but that he should be a workman in the best sense of the word; that he should take a high interest in his work; that he should have good surroundings; the very best materials to use; and should not be harried at his work by the everlasting thought of how the job was to pay him. The spirit of competition never entered the doors of the Kelmscott Press. Everyone had plenty of time allowed him, so that he might put forth his best effort. No man ever detested a botch more than William Morris; he was a firm believer in the oldfashioned maxim that if a thing is worth doing at all, it should be done well. I recollect once telling Morris that a certain typographical correction, if done according to his directions, would take a long time. His reply— and it was characteristic—was: 'I don't care: if it takes three months, it must be done!' He knew no such word as 'can't.' He had a ready way with difficulties, and often turned a seeming difficulty into a real advantage. From the nature of the work we had many difficulties to contend with; but when a difficulty had been surmounted, his hearty: 'I like that! It is just what I wanted!' was sufficient reward for the previous trouble and tediousness. He was a man of splendid energy, and it did one good to come in contact with his fine breezy nature."

As a contrast in points of view, the verdict rendered by the head of a large commercial printing works, with some pretensions to artistic leanings, whom I once took over the Press, may here be cited. He watched the compositors carefully setting, and still more carefully justifying, line after line; looked with a discontented eye at the pressmen heedfully pulling sheet after sheet, minutely examining each one to see whether it were up to the mark; and as he left, summed up his impressions: "We-e-ll? That's all very well for Mr. Morris, but there isn't a man here that would be worth a penny an hour to me after he'd been here for a week!"

New Year's Day, 1892, saw the first delivery of the "Troy" type, and a trial-page of the *Chaucer* was immediately set up in it and pulled. The letter proved to be much too large for the purpose, and Morris at once decided to have it reduced from Great Primer (18-point) to Pica (12-point). This third fount, the "Chaucer," made its first appearance in the list of chapter-headings prefixed to the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, published on the 24th of November. It had begun to be delivered in July, however, in which month a trial-page of the *Chaucer* had been set up in it and pulled, and the form of the *Chaucer* as it now is finally decided on.

The *Historyes of Troye* was the second of the five Caxton reprints, of which two were edited by F. S. Ellis, and three by the writer. Those edited by F. S. Ellis, the *Golden Legend* and the *Order of Chivalry*, in deference to the editor's tastes and desires, were, as nearly as might be, textual and literal reproductions of Caxton's editions. The three others, the *Historyes of Troye*, *Reynard the Foxe* and *Godefrey of Boloyne*, were differently treated, as Morris wished them to be regarded as Kelmscott Press editions, and therefore to be amended where this was desirable. Caxton's text was to be taken as a basis, but not looked upon as archaeologically sacrosanct. It was to be collated with Caxton's originals, and corrected where need was, mistranslations being put right and omissions filled in, care being taken to preserve the style and flavour of Caxton in doing this. When we came to the *Godefrey of Boloyne*, Morris decided that the original spelling need not be rigorously adhered to, as Caxton was an erratic speller, following no discernible rule, and that we were consequently free to retrench or add a letter where the justification of a line could be improved or a "river" avoided thereby.

Hence has arisen a legend that may as well be put an end to. The *Godefrey of Boloyne* was reviewed in the *Academy* by a certain German *philolog*, who addressed himself to the task as to one of his *Vorschungen*, painstakingly counted up and enumerated every divergence from the original text, even the most minute, stigmatizing each and all of them as printer's errors. His version of the facts found acceptance here and there, and I recently came across the latest form of it in a newspaper paragraph: "It may be of interest to mention that William Morris,

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when he began his reprints at the Kelmscott Press, did not know that a reader was required to correct the compositor's work. After the production of one of the early Kelmscott books, Mr. Morris found that he had allowed several misprints to pass, and he then, upon inquiry, discovered the existence of the printer's reader, and engaged one. It is probable that the collation of the first book printed at the Kelmscott Press with its original would disclose enough mistakes to entitle the work to rank among the curiosities of literature."

In this farrago of nonsense there is hardly one word of truth. Morris had not been an active and prolific writer for thirty years without having "discovered the existence of the printer's reader"; none of the Kelmscott Press books, reprint or no, need fear comparison on the score of printer's errors with any other books in the world. In the first days of the Press, it is true no printer's reader in the ordinary understanding of the term was employed, the place being more than supplied by the competent volunteers who "read" for the Press, taking the work seriously and priding themselves upon its due performance, but as time went on and the work grew in volume an ordinary professional reader was employed.

Alongside of the *Historyes of Troye*, Ruskin's *Nature of Gothic*, Morris's *Defence of Guenevere* and *A Dream of John Ball*, as well as Caxton's *Golden Legend*, were also going through the press, being published in the order named.

The *Defence of Guenevere* was finished at the beginning of April, published on May 19th, being the first book bound in limp vellum, which was henceforth to be the rule for all books not issued in boards ("Half Holland"), the first book with marginal ornaments, and the only book bearing a handwritten title on the back, the writing being done by Herbert M. Ellis, a son of F. S. Ellis.

So many inquiries had to be answered that a book-list was got out in May 1892, but as only the address of the Press appeared on it, letters continued to reach Morris, to his annoyance. On the second book-list, issued in July, my name and address as the secretary of the Press were given. In spite of this, letters were still addressed to Morris, and the third list, sent out in December, carried the further intimation: "to whom should be addressed all letters relating to books to which no

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publisher's name is as yet attached." In these and some later subsequent lists, the title and particulars of each book were given in the type used for that book.

A woodcut titlepage, designed by Morris, and engraved by W. H. Hooper, was prefixed to the *Golden Legend*; this was the first book to be so decorated, and the second with marginal ornaments. It was also, as has already been said, the only important Kelmscott book of which no copies were printed on vellum. Of marginal ornaments, the *Golden Legend* has only two, but the *Historyes of Troye*, which followed it, is richly adorned with them, ranking third—*Godefrey of Boloyne* being second—as a handsome book to the unapproachable *Chaucer*. The *Historyes of Troye* was the first book in which the new "Chaucer" type was used at all; the first entirely printed therein being the *Order of Chivalry*.

Godefrey of Boloyne was published by and from the Kelmscott Press direct, without the intervention of any publisher, as were all books thenceforward, with the exception of those already promised to or to be commissioned by a publisher. This course was adopted for more than one reason: it saved bookkeeping, as books were paid for in advance, and could be delivered to subscribers direct from the binders; it enabled Morris to give preference to purchasers of single copies, and to see that an unfair share did not fall into the hands of those who would hold them for a rise; it also gave him exact information with regard to the real and immediate sale of each book, and thus placed him in a position to guard against over-printing.

A case of apparent over-printing, as it happens, did occur with the next book but one to be issued, though Morris had nothing to do with it. Tennyson's *Maud*, the first octavo with a woodcut titlepage, and one of Morris's loveliest at that, was finished for Macmillans in August and published by them on September 20th. Five hundred copies were ordered and printed, and of these the usual three hundred or thereabouts were sold at once, but the others hung fire for a while. What happened then is thus recounted by the *Scottish Review*: "Messrs. Macmillan, who published Tennyson's *Maud*, were somewhat disappointed with the sale of 500 copies, the price to the public of which was two guineas. Hence, to their after

regret, they announced to the trade that some two hundred copies, I think, would be sold as a remainder. On the morning after the issue of the notice, one enthusiast stationed himself at the firm's door at 6 A.M., there to wait patiently until the opening hour. By noon, not a single copy, at any rate at the remainder price, was procurable. The joke against Mr. Macmillan will not soon be allowed to drop." It may be added that *Maud*, though the only Kelmscott Press book to be "remaindered," now stands next to Shakespeare's *Poems* among the smaller books in the rarity with which it comes into the market.

In October-November 1893 one of the presses was removed to the Arts and Crafts Exhibition at the New Gallery, and Morris's *Gothic Architecture*, which had been set up·at the Press, was printed in public, under the eyes of an interested and constantly renewed crowd, whose presence imposed a severe strain upon the pressman Collins's Celtic modesty. This "moving exhibit" formed one of the salient attractions of the Exhibition. The text of the little book had been delivered as a lecture to the Society two years before.

Though each successive book was taken up to the end as a new adventure, it was only for the actors that such a long succession of closely similar adventures could retain their freshness, and, now that the story of the Press has been brought up to the point at which it was a steadily running enterprise, it would be impossible to communicate their thrill in a recital. To describe a succession of events, identical in outline, though differing in detail, detail that may well appear to be inconsequential to all but those to whom it was once a matter of moment, events that were enthralling to live through but are unexciting merely to read about, would be to invite monotony. Nor is there any need for attempting such a description, full detail with regard to every publication of the Press being given in Mr. Cockerell's catalogue in the appendix (pages 148-174).

Indeed, from this time on, the only outstanding date in the history of the Press, until the appearance of the *Chaucer*, was New Year's Day, 1895, when another house was taken at No. 21 Upper Mall, just across the way from No. 14, and on the bank of the river. Here a third press was installed and kept busy upon the *Chaucer*, for which work it had been specially

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built, until the book had been completed. After it had been vacated by the Press, No. 21 was turned into a granary, but, much altered and partly rebuilt, is again occupied as a dwelling-house.

From 1893 onwards, as A. L. Cotton said in the *Contemporary Review*, "with every issue some new development is noticeable, some added delicacy in treatment, until, in 1896, the culminating point was reached in the production of the magnificent folio *Chaucer*, undoubtedly the noblest book as yet achieved by any English printer." The *Academy* editorially declared that the *Chaucer* "forms a great landmark in the history of printing, and were sufficiently monumental in itself, had he produced no other book, to render the names of the Kelmscott Press and William Morris memorable for all time." And the editor of the *Nineteenth Century* ranked it as "the greatest triumph of English typography."

"With its eighty-seven illustrations by Burne-Jones, each surrounded by an ornamental border from the hand of Morris," wrote A. L. Cotton, "with its abundance of ornamental initial words and letters, with its marginal decorations, its paper firm and crisp to the touch like the paper of a Bank of England note, its exquisite type, its careful press-work, the volume compels admiration even from those most disposed to cavil at the medievalism of the great designer. As a marvel of typography, it ranks with the very finest efforts of the past. . . . In the selection of Burne-Jones as illustrator, Morris again was fortunate beyond his hopes. It was a canon of his bookmaking that the ornament, whether patternwork or illustration, must form as much a part of the page as the type itself, and must, in order to succeed, submit to certain limitations, and become, in his own phrase, *architectural*. . . . In other words, the illustrations of a volume should sum up in themselves the printed matter; they should be decorative in character, conceived with due consideration to the nature and arrangement of the type; and, as ornaments, they should take their place amidst the text, not detached and unconnected as in many modern *livres de luxe*, but giving, by their very position, something of distinctive dignity to the typography."
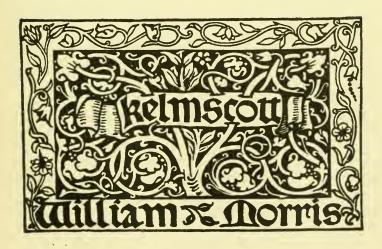
If it were Morris's very great good fortune to have Burne-Jones at hand, a lifelong friend, sympathetic, understanding, a

INITIAL WORD FOR "THE WATER OF THE WONDROUS ISLES"
BY WILLIAM MORRIS

One of the last two designs made by Morris shortly before his death

THE FIRST COLOPHON

great artist, as it most undoubtedly was, for two such men come together but seldom, and still more rarely are united for so long or so intimately, both Morris and Burne-Jones were fortunate in having another artist, R. Catterson-Smith, to work with and between them. Burne-Jones was before and above all else a painter, seeing all things, form included, in terms of colour, and would have had to spend much time— time which neither he nor Morris could well afford—upon study and practice in order to be able to render that which he saw in colour through the alien, or, at least, the unaccustomed, medium of strong black line. But here it was that Catterson-Smith could render, and rendered, inestimable help; he was able to appreciate exactly what Burne-Jones meant by his drawings, and accurately to translate that which had been conceived in terms of colour into the terms of line; to express that meaning to perfection in the language of line, and not only this, but to express it in the very dialect or idiom of that language which was demanded by the purpose in view. For his task was to translate Burne-Jones's delicate pencil drawings into firm ink lines which were photographed on to woodblocks to be engraved in facsimiles that would harmonize with and complete the page of lettering, and be undistinguishable in character and tone from the line employed by Morris in his type, initials, borders and ornaments. When Morris's pencil fell from his enfeebled hand, it was Catterson-Smith who completed the designs for the grimly appropriate words "Whilom" and "Empty"; and he also designed three borders for the *Earthly Paradise* to fill places for which Morris had been unable to provide.

Of Morris's early designs, the borders and "bloomers" in the *Glittering Plain* and *Poems by the Way* were, most of them, speedily discarded as being too heavy for the letter. Although they were designed almost concurrently with his type, he had not succeeded in reconciling them with it, not having seen it as yet in page form. Later on, indeed, he sometimes took the precaution, when designing a border or "weeper," of having a page pulled on drawing-paper and working on that, being careful to reverse the text, so as to get the effect of the typography without having his attention distracted by the wording. His doing this has misled some collectors, as I have seen, into

framing an example upside-down; that is to say, taking the text for guide, they have placed that right-side-up, thereby standing the design upon its head.

After Morris's death on October 3rd, 1896, the Kelmscott Press was kept in being for some eighteen months by his trustees, F. S. Ellis and S. C. Cockerell, with Emery Walker's assistance, in order to clear up the work already in hand and carry through the more important undertakings that he had planned and prepared for. Many other books than those actually printed had been talked of by him, and would have been produced had he lived; but these, in the absence of instructions as to type, style, size, etc., and of the decorations to be specially designed for them, the trustees did not feel free to proceed with. They rightly felt that William Morris *was* the Kelmscott Press; that without him it could not continue to exist; and that their duty ended with completing work actually undertaken or clearly outlined and fully prepared for by him.

Their last publication was a reprint of Morris's *Note* on his aims in founding the Press, to which was added a *Short Description* of the Press and an *Annotated List* of the books printed thereat, written by S. C. Cockerell. By kind permission of the trustees, this has been reprinted verbatim and in extenso as an appendix to the present volume.

VII

BOOKS PRINTED

ALTHOUGH the work of the Kelmscott Press must stand or fall by the physical beauty of the books it produced, the tale of it, and an understanding of its relation to Morris's life and thought as a whole, would be woefully incomplete without some appreciation of their contents. For, with two or three exceptions, where friendship intervened, every Kelmscott Press book was either a work of his own or an old favourite, long valued, whose production in decent-seeming form was an act of love. Even those that were commissioned by publishers—*The Book of Wisdom and Lies*, Tennyson's *Maud*, Rossetti's *Poems* and *Hand and Soul*—had, each of them, a personal appeal to him as interesting and desirable for their own sake, deserving the care with which he printed them. In the absence of a definite claim, either intrinsic or enforced by friendship, no book would or could have been printed by him. Above and before all else, a book must be worth reading to be worth printing, and his choice of books depended upon his preferences from this point of view. If worth reading again and again, and not merely skimmed through as a pastime or ephemeral refreshment, it was worth all that could be done for it in the way of typography, paper and all else, and its decoration must not be something added to or stuck on to a readable and therefore useful thing, but an organic outgrowth of the comeliness which was a function of its utility; something which need not be put into it for the bare sake of usefulness, but must be put into it as an expression of pleasure in its making and an enhancement of joy in its use. Illustrations, of course, must be determined by the text and merely conditioned by the type and the size of the

page; but the decoration must be determined by the typography, and be conditioned only by the limitations of space and of taste.

In an apologetic aside, Morris once pleaded that it was "only natural" that he, being "a decorator by profession," should attempt to ornament a book suitably. Although philistines have attacked him from time to time for doing so as richly as he did, there can be but few remaining by now, even among philistines, who do not realize how great is the gift he has left us in the good measure and running over of decorative design with which the Kelmscott Press books are enriched. Until the accidents of time and life have once more united such a team as was found in Morris and Burne-Jones, with Catterson-Smith and Hooper to aid them, we are unlikely to be lucky enough to fall in again for so rich a heritage of enduring beauty.

That he had felt his own books to be worth writing would quite naturally suggest that he should think them worth printing, even if they had not already been accepted and acclaimed as they deserved. Yet it was not of them he thought first. As we have seen, it was no more than a hazard which made him begin with a book of his own, because it came handy, or go on to a second, because the matter for it was in existence, and there was a demand that this material be assembled into permanent form. Had it not been for the oversight which resulted in the delivery of a wrong size of paper, the first book would have been produced in honour of the first English printer, though rather in his capacity of story-teller than in his capacity as printer. It was the wealth of stories in the *Golden Legend* that formed its attraction for Morris. As it was, his own books are in a minority, and it was not upon them that he bestowed his most loving care or most fertile invention. It is but fitting, however, that his own books be given precedence here, and as he began with poetry, so may we.

"In the poetry of Morris," said the *Daily Chronicle* at the time of his death, "all his passion for imperfect Utopias past, and perfect Utopias to come, all his hatred of monstrous modernity, all his sense of life as a thing capable of being and meant to be radiant, joyous, unoppressed, found their true form. The *Defence of Guenevere*, the *Life and Death of Jason*, the *Earthly Paradise*, the *Story of Sigurd*, *Love is Enough*, *Poems*

by the Way, with translations of the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*—what worship of beauty is in these! Beauty in a very wide and full sense, including beauty of battle and storm, of action and passion, not less than of things peaceful and at rest, things comely and calm. Beginning with a mystical and remote world of enchantment, he became gradually more and more enamoured of a fresh and simple world, romantic indeed, but conceivable; and he ended with songs for Socialists, practical march music for the Israelites *in exitu de Aegypto*. From a personal passion for beauty, he came to hunger for its universal empire among men, beauty of work and pleasure, beauty for the common weal. Rossetti, cloistral and eclectic, never dreamed phantasies more piercing in their strangeness and haunting in their visionariness than some poems in the *Defence of Guenevere*. ... Here we are in the very heart of Avalon or Broceliande, or some country stranger still and more fearful in its mystery. Other poems, with a note of Froissart and the Chronicles in them, songs of war and fierceness and wild glad life, prepare us for the more spirited parts of *Jason* and the *Earthly Paradise*, but even these two works are medieval in their processional pageantry and languorousness, whilst their greater art, their improved mastery in craftsmanship, make them less startling than the unearthly earlier volume. Still, full of the sea and the air and the green fields, they take us away from the mysterious atmosphere of the first poems, and the vehement Saga spirit of *Sigurd* does not come as a surprise. The Norse and Icelandic sweep and surge of passion, high-hearted and true, woke all the scald in him, the impassioned chaunting rhapsodist, suddenly aflame with inspiration."

His translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, not having been reprinted at the Kelmscott Press, do not come into the story, but all his original poems were and do; these are named above in the order of their first appearance, and in that order will be treated here.

The *Defence of Guenevere* was published in 1858, when Morris was twenty-four, and a little over two years after he left Oxford, where many of the poems had been written. Few of his earliest poems found a place in it, however, as most of these had been destroyed. Acting by instinct upon what afterwards became a reasoned conclusion—that a work of art must pro-

ceed from one continued action of the mind, and if it does not "come right" at once must not be "pulled right" but thrown aside—a poem with which he was dissatisfied was torn up or burnt. The few that exist, including the first he wrote, "The Willow and the Red Cliff," now printed in the Collected Edition of his works, were preserved by his poet-friend, Canon Dixon, who kept copies of them. Those that he published in the *Defence of Guenevere* fall, roughly, into two categories: poems inspired by the reading of Malory, and poems inspired by the reading of Froissart.

Under the spell of these two wizards, Malory and Froissart, the young poet had fallen, and under it he remained to a greater or less extent until the end of his life; though the influence of Malory waned somewhat as the youthful dreamer grew up to be the mature man of action, Froissart's chronicle of brave deeds and stirring events lost none of its enduring charm. Morris did not merely read but *live* both Malory and Froissart, and these early poems are those of a young, sensitive and creative mind, endowed with an extraordinary power of seeing the characters of a story, not as pictured figures upon a fanciful background, but as flesh and blood, men and women who breathe and move and act amid their natural surroundings— surroundings that are more often remembered than imagined; for the forests of Epping and Savernake, the cities of Rouen and Oxford, Beauvais, Bruges, Amiens, Chartres, as he saw them first and as no man will ever see them again, the little towns and villages and farms, the roads and rivers, of rural France and England, were already his at call. Nor did he merely see these men and women in their surroundings; he lived among them as one of themselves, feeling their emotions as though they were his own, every detail of temperament, costume, scenery, vividly realized, and struck in with an assured and sympathetic hand.

As he instinctively acted upon the principle that a work of art must proceed from one uninterrupted action of the mind, so with equal certainty and rightness did he address his verse to the ear, relating an episode, as later on he was to tell many a story, directly and simply, without rhetorical or dramatic artifice or "literary" embellishment, rather as a recitative than as a recitation. That this return to nature embarrassed the critics

of 1858 is hardly to be wondered at, seeing that it continues to disconcert the critics of to-day. Dr. Richard Garnett, himself a poet, writing in the *Literary Gazette*, was the only accepted critic of the time to hail the newcomer at his value and at once. John Skelton ("Shirley") followed suit in 1860, incidentally pointing out what still needs to be reaffirmed, that the unfamiliar words used here and there by Morris are "not mere fantasy; that the employment of antique and formal words and habits is not formal or antiquarian only, but denotes a living insight into the thought and heart of the dead people whose life they shaped."

Of the effect of the poems upon Morris's contemporaries we may judge by two instances. Andrew Lang said, years later: "I and several of my contemporaries at college knew the *Defence of Guenevere* almost by heart, before the name of Mr. Morris was renowned, and before he had published the *Life and Death of Jason*. We found in the earlier book something which no other contemporary poet possessed in the same measure: an extraordinary power in the realm of fantasy; an unrivalled sense of what was most exquisite and rare in the life of the Middle Ages. We found Froissart's people alive again in Mr. Morris's poems, and we knew better what thoughts and emotions lay in the secret of their hearts than we could learn from the bright superficial pages of Froissart." Val Prinsep has described a dinner in Oxford with Rossetti, at which Morris was present, afterwards being pressed by Rossetti to read some of his poems: "the effect produced on my mind was so strong that to this day, forty years after, I can still recall the scene. Rossetti on the sofa, with large melancholy eyes fixed on Morris, the poet at the table reading and ever fidgeting with his watch-chain, and Burne-Jones working at a pen-and-ink drawing. . . . I confess I returned to the Mitre with my brain in a whirl."

Morris continued to write, and write in verse, because he could not help it, but for nine years he published nothing in volume form. Painting with Rossetti and Burne-Jones, architecture with Street and Philip Webb, modelling and carving by himself, the foundation and management of Morris, Faulkner, Marshall & Co., with all the decorative crafts to be mastered, account for his apparent inactivity. By 1866, as we

know, the *Earthly Paradise* was "in the air," and among the stories planned for it was one to be called "The Deeds of Jason." This grew upon his hands—mainly, I think, because of his deepening interest in Medea, who fills the rôle of heroine much more notably than does Jason that of hero—until he decided to let it stand alone as the *Life and Death of Jason*. On its appearance in 1867 it was an immediate and undisputed success, though here and there a reservation was made which reads funnily nowadays. Thus, the *Athenæum* interrupts a cordial welcome of the poem to remark that it "has nothing in common with the hopes, the interests and the sympathies of modern life; for all that appears in this poem, the creed of Christendom might never have been professed." And this was not the severest rebuke addressed to the poet for failing to foist 19th century morality upon a prehistoric Greek story, for one reviewer bitterly complained that an English poet should have represented a princess as visiting a single gentleman in his bedroom!

Joseph Knight in the *Literary Gazette*, an anonymous critic in the *Spectator*, another in the *Times*, and Swinburne in the *Fortnightly*, were unqualified in their praise. The *Spectator* underlines the originality of Morris's Medea, no longer the legendary sorceress and little more, but a woman great in her love and letting all else go for love, and sums up the poem as "a delightful mixture of the old and the new, of Hellenic tradition exercising its peculiar spell over an Anglo-Saxon mind." Swinburne writes: "Here is a poem sown of itself. Sprung from no alien seed, cut after no alien model; fresh as wind, bright as light; full of the spring and the sun. . . . Rarely but in the ballad and romance periods has such poetry been written, so broad and sad and simple, so full of deep and direct fire, certain of its aim, without blemish, without fault; . . . the verse . . . is as the garment of Medea, steeped in strange moisture as of tears and liquid flame, to be kindled by the sun." Charles Eliot Norton in the *Nation*, and Henry James in the *North American Review*, as part of their praise of the poem, also commented upon the importance given to Medea, and the power with which her character had been rendered. Ruskin, in his *Queen of the Air*, said that we "may obtain a more truthful idea of the nature of Greek religion and legend from the poems of

ceriſ tuuſ peſlicem illi eſſe confiteriſ. Ea mulieriſ ſcite atq̄
prudentiſ erga filium ſerocem comitaſ ſenſim & comiter
admonuuſſe eum uiſa eſt. deponendam eſſe opinionem
uanam quam ille ingentibuſ uictoriiſ & adulantium
blandimentiſ & rebuſ ſupra fidem proſperiſ imbiberat
genitum eſſe ſeſe de ioue.

A Riſtotileſ philoſophuſ annoſ iam fere natuſ duo
& l x. corpore egro affectoq̄, ac ſpe uiteq̄ tenui
fuit tunc omniſ eiuſ ſectatorem cohorſ ad eum
accedit oranteſ obſecranteſq̄ ut ipſe diligeret loci ſui &
magiſterii ſucceſſorem quo poſt ſummum eiuſ diem pro
inde ut ipſo uteretur ad ſtudia doctrinarum complen -
da excolendaq̄. quibuſ a beo imbuti fuiſſent. Erant tunc
in euſ ludo boni multi: ſed precipui duo. theoſraſtuſ &
menedemuſ. Ingenio bi atq̄ doctriniſ c.eteroſ preſtabat
Alter ex inſula leſbo fuit: menedemuſ autem Rhodo.
Ariſtotileſ reſpondit facturum eſſe quod uellent cum id
ſibi foret tempeſtiuum. poſtea breui tempore cum illi q̄
de magiſtro deſtinando petierant preſenteſ eſſent. uinum
ait quod tum biberet non eſſe id ex ualitudine ſua, ſed in
ſalubre eſſe atq̄ aſperum ac propterea quem debere ex
oticum uel Rhodium aliquod uel leſbuum id ſibi utriuſq̄
ut curarent petiuit. uſurumq̄ eo dixit quod ſe ſe magiſ
uuiſſet. eunt curant inueniunt afferunt. Tum ariſto
tileſ rhodum petit deguſtat firmum inquit hercle ui
num & iocundum. petit mox Leſbuum quo idem degu
ſtato utrinq̄ inquit ob optido bonum ſed

id ubi dixit nemini fuit dubium quin lepide ſi
mul & uerecunde ſucceſſorem illa uoce ſibi non uinū
delegiſſet. iſ erat e leſbo theoſraſtuſ homo ſuauitate

Keats, and the nearly as beautiful, and, in general grasp of subject, far more powerful, recent work of Morris, than from frigid scholarship, however extensive. Not that the poet's impressions or renderings of things are wholly true, but their truth is vital, not formal."

In the *Earthly Paradise*, of which the first volume was published in April 1868, and the fourth in December 1870, are gathered up a winnowed selection of Morris's most favourite stories, taken at will from the literature of half the world. Their ultimate sources have been laboriously identified by Dr. Julius Riegel in his *Die Quellen von William Morris's Dichtung "The Earthly Paradise,"* a book which not only pleased and amused Morris but "taught him a great deal about his stories that he had not known before." As a matter of fact, his method then, as throughout his life, was to read widely for his own interest and amusement—with such catholicity of taste that I have seen him read the *Gesta Romanorum* and Gaboriau's *Monsieur Lecoq* with what appeared to be an equal absorption—and if a story appealed to him as re-tellable, to re-read it, either at once or later on, lay the book aside, and allow the tale to grow as it would in his own mind. So that, in identifying their *quellen*, Dr. Riegel has by no means always identified the place or shape in which Morris found them. Some of them, and not the least beautiful, may even have grown from a bald paragraph in Lemprière, just as, years later, *A King's Lesson* sprang and flowered into poignancy and charm from a chance-met "fill-up" at the foot of a column in Dickens's *Household Words*.

Neither in the *Earthly Paradise* nor ever, as the *Edinburgh Review* (1897) pointed out, did Morris attempt to produce "literature," "he wanted to tell a story effectively, to throw a new light on a situation (as he certainly does in the *Defence of Guenevere*), to realize some of the actualities of medieval life, and to present a vivid picture to the eye, by descriptive epithets in regard to colour and detail which are brought in so naturally that they seem not so much inventions as descriptions of what the writer had actually seen. . . . This Homeric gift of visualizing a scene, and seizing on all its details, is obvious through all Morris's poetry. . . . All the details of the scene are gone through with touch after touch, till we seem to be drawn into it, and forget the modern world entirely."

With this book, Morris finally and quite definitely ranked himself among the foremost poets of his age. Two such very different and far distant men as John Morley and John Greenleaf Whittier thus hailed him; Whittier declaring the poem to be one of the greatest of the century, and Morley that it might easily outlive Tennyson or Browning. Indeed, so universal, definitive and permanent was and is the admiration it evoked, that Morris has been labelled for all time—to the detriment of his later, and in many respects far stronger, work—as "the Author of the *Earthly Paradise*."

Two or three points on which it and he have been misunderstood, however, call for notice. First, the shadow of death which has been said to hang over it, and the brooding dreaminess which has been held to pervade it. Just as 19th-century manners and moralities were inevitably "out of the picture" when the poet was dealing with Jason and Medea, so here— when it is remembered that the Wanderers, the central figures of the story, are fleeing from the Black Death, and have been disillusioned by their long ill-success in finding that paradise upon earth of which they are in search—the hatred and fear of death, a sense of the unreality, impermanence and uncertainty of life are with equal inevitability "in the picture." Then, this needful or even compulsory element of the theme, and its treatment by the poet, has too often been transferred to the poet himself, and a personal fear of death attributed to him. That Morris had the strong man's dislike for death as an idea is true; what was repugnant in the idea was not death in itself, however, but the cessation of creative activity that it implied; the cutting short of that patterned web of work and love, repeating always, with essential unity underlying its ever-varying detail, that was his ideal of life. There was no cowardice in his attitude, but that which interrupted the pattern, disarranged its continuity, or derogated from its beauty, he regarded as a catastrophe; and the death of Dickens, for whom his love and admiration were unbounded, in the midst of an unfinished and unfinishable work, haunted his memory for the rest of his days as a heart-shaking tragedy. That the pattern of life should not merely be cut short but torn across, as it were, leaving its end ragged and its intent frustrated, was more than his mind could face with tranquillity.

Again, his over-quoted envoy is to be considered in relation to the conditions under which he wrote, and the difficulties with which he was contending as a designer and maker of beautiful things. In and through his decorative work, he was being increasingly faced by the dishonesties which hampered, and the lack of competence in others which impeded, the realization of his desires. And he was being forced, sorely against the grain, to recognize that sooner or later he would be driven into neglecting or interrupting his chosen task, to descend into the arena and give battle to the forces of error and of wrong. To sing of cleaner and simpler times in materialistic days, when most ears were attuned to the chink of money and to little else, was "idle," a vain waste of effort, and the days of old were "empty" to a generation which despised all pre-mechanistic, pre-scientific existence. And his protest that he was not "born to set the crooked straight" was wrung from him by the premonition that within the next few years, at the expense of his personal health and comfort and the interruption of his work, he would be giving up a great part of his time and energy to doing that very thing. Indeed, his first lecture, in 1877, shows that he had thought much and been deeply preoccupied for a long while with regard to social questions.

Love is Enough (1872) is the most frequently mentioned of all his works, next to the *Earthly Paradise*, yet, paradoxically enough, appears to be one of the least known. Rossetti thought the "sort of masque" was "a very fine work," and "at a higher point of execution perhaps than anything he has done—having a passionate lyric quality such as one found in his earliest work, and of course much more mature balance in carrying out." A "sort of masque" or mystery play it is, conceived as passing upon five receding planes of action, of which the first is that of the physical world, while the others are more and more dimly seen through the mists of reality, until upon the furthest the pure passion of love is impersonal and has lost all touch with the flesh. For once, Morris revealed that mystical side of his complex nature that he usually kept well hidden. Of all his poems, this is the most hauntingly melodious; the reader who can read it aloud—crooning rather than declaiming it—and can remain unmoved, or fail to be haunted for the rest of his days by its flowing harmony

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and subtle rhythm, may write himself down as an irredeemable philistine.

Morris, as I knew him in later years, did not care to talk about *Love is Enough*, and it was obviously not among those of his works he liked most, probably because of the self-revelation to which I have alluded. On one occasion, talking about the deeper things with J. H. Middleton and others, he electrified those present by snatching down the volume from his bookshelves, rapping upon it with a paper-knife, pointing to its title, and exclaiming: "There's a lie for you, though 'twas I that told it! Love isn't enough in itself; love *and work*, yes! *Work* and love, that's the life of a man! Why, a fellow can't even love decently unless he's got work to do, and pulls his weight in the boat!"

While the *Earthly Paradise* was on the stocks, Morris took up the study of Icelandic with Eirikr Magnusson, thus coming into personal contact with northern stories and myths in their native tongue, and naturalizing himself into a strange, unspoilt and very wonderful world of heroic thought and action, which he had hitherto known only at second hand or as a casual visitor. The life and literature of the North had always attracted him strongly, as may be seen from the northern elements in the *Earthly Paradise*, but now that he could enter freely into the northern mind through its purest and most characteristic expression, untainted with any tinge of modernity, he felt, as he said of his visit to Iceland itself: "It was no idle whim that drew me there, but a true instinct for what I needed." And to the *Volsunga Saga* he was especially drawn, regarding it as the finest story in the world, not so much because of its restrained but high-wrought emotional strength, or its terse telling, or its romantic remoteness, as because it seemed to him to focus and confront all the dominant passions and forces of life. Manhood of the most noble type, and godhood made after its own image, at grips with ineluctable doom, taking all things heroically and as they come, without that hysterical unmanliness which had always irked him even in his best-loved Greeks, or that unimaginative efficiency which had offended him in the Romans, wrought upon him and stirred him to the depths of his being, finding embodiment at length in the one true sustained epic in English, written with supreme

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rightness in a metre and a style that are characteristically English, owing nothing to foreign or classical influences. The metre is intrinsically that of our native ballads and folk-songs, enriched with a deeper note and a more potent swing; in Morris's hands it is infinitely flexible, giving direct and passionate expression to the woe-torn womanhood of Brynhild, the fate-laden hatred of Fafnir, or the godlike wrath and sorrow of Odin, held as helpless as are mortals by an all-ruling fate. And the style is limpid, simple, strong, having a cumulative power that is rare in modern English, growing its own beauties as it goes, unspoilt by any recourse to rhetoric, unveneered with any verbal marqueterie. *Sigurd the Volsung* (1877) is out and away the greatest, as it is the last, of Morris's longer poems, and that by which he himself would rather be remembered.

Poems by the Way (1891) is a collection of Morris's short and fugitive poems, most of which had appeared in the *Fortnightly*, *Time*, *Athenæum*, *English Illustrated*, *Academy*, and other periodicals, including the *Commonweal*, and ranging in date from 1868 to 1889. One poem, "Goldilocks and Goldilocks," was written by request, in order to "bump out" the volume to its required length. Had it not been for C. Fairfax Murray, who had preserved some early unpublished poems and kept a record of others that had been printed, it would have been almost impossible to get the volume together; for, as has been said already, Morris was unhelpful in this respect. Even as it was, though other friends contributed their aid, several poems remained uncollected—*e.g.* two sonnets published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1870—and it is quite possible that others will still be discovered. As might be expected, there is little or no unity of method or of mood in a collection of poems written at such widely separated times and under such varying conditions, and ranging over so many spheres of thought and interest. Among them are some—"The Message of the March Wind," for example—which must be classed with his finest lyric masterpieces; while, of the volume as a whole, the *Athenæum* said: "In all that is noble in temper and beautiful in art, this volume could hardly be surpassed by the author of *Sigurd*. . . . In Mr. Morris's case, the high poetic temper does not wane, but, on the contrary, waxes with

years; its expression is mellower now." And the *Academy* was almost as emphatic in its praise.

In all his later work, with one partial exception—the *House of the Wolfings*, which, it will be recalled, was "written in prose and in verse"—Morris turned to prose for the expression of his "high poetic temper;" and his telling of tales—"I must have a story to write now as long as I live," said he—took the form of those prose romances which would ensure his immortality had he nothing else to his name. As a youth at Oxford, he had tried his hand upon prose fiction; in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was published, amongst others, a short story of contemporary life, with a cold, proud, high-nosed heroine, named Mabel. But prose was not then his natural medium, and the laboured stiffness of his writing betrays the effort it cost him. Several years later, he essayed a novel upon orthodox lines, but speedily dropped it as an uncongenial task; he could not accept the conventions, or move with freedom amid the restrictions, of modern society; and he found that the story was turning out to be, as he avowed, "nothing but landscape and sentiment."

His intense work upon the translation of the Icelandic sagas, however, and the many lectures he wrote for delivery before varying audiences upon subjects about which he felt keenly, unconsciously trained him as a prosewriter, giving him the facility of expression in prose that hitherto he had found only in verse. His wide reading, and how wide that was has been seen, gave him a vocabulary which ranged over the thousand-year wealth of English words; his practice in rendering the laconic and compact style of the sagas into closely equivalent English had confirmed his affection for, and strengthened his command over, the curt and pithy words which are native to our tongue, but which had gone out of fashion and been supplanted by imported longtailed synonyms. His laborious and oft-repeated endeavours to reach the minds of unprepared hearers, to force them to understand and, if possible, to accept his ideas upon art as an indispensable component of life, had increased the power displayed by him in his poems from the very beginning, that of telling a story with a clear directness which gives it a reality that realism toils in vain to achieve. Call his romances day-

dreams, as has been done, and it must be admitted that, if they are day-dreams, they are only so to the extent to which all good stories must be; stories, that is, which are told and heard as an escape from the commonplaces, and a redressing of the injustices, of everyday life; a recoil from the elaborate cowardices and mean cruelties of contemporary civilization, an outcome of the writer's homesickness for a stronger, simpler, more fully human life than that of his day and time: the homesickness wistfully described in the titlepage poem for the *House of the Wolfings*:

> Whiles in the early winter eve
> We pass amid the gathering night
> Some homestead that we had to leave
> Years past: and see its candles bright
> Shine in the room beside the door
> Where we were merry years agone
> But now must never enter more,
> As still the dark road drives us on.
> E'en so the world of man may turn
> At even of some hurried day
> And see the ancient glimmer burn
> Across the waste that hath no way;
> Then with the faint light in its eyes
> A while I bid it linger near
> And nurse in wavering memories
> The bitter-sweet of days that were.

At the least and worst, it must be said of him that, if he dreamed of remote action in an unreal world, he acted out his dreams fiercely and effectively in the real one.

It was, as always, a need of the moment that brought him to the practice of a new craft. A serial story, to steady the circulation of the *Commonweal*, was badly needed, and Morris asked one of his helpers to write one, suggesting Wat Tyler's rebellion as a fitting theme. Puzzled and offended by a refusal on the ground of a lack of the epic faculty, he thundered out: "Epic faculty be hanged for a yarn! Confound it, man, you've *only* got to tell a *story*!" Whether his vexation acted as a stimulus or no, the idea remained but a very few days in the "back-shop" before he turned up at the *Commonweal* office, one Wednesday morning, with a first instalment which was at once

rushed into type. The rest of the story was written from week to week (1886–1887) as required, in moments of respite from other and more pressing work. That it had much influence upon the circulation of the paper cannot be said, but its reception in volume form was enthusiastic, and it still continues to pass through edition after edition. In spite, or because, of its propagandist motive, its necessary contact and contrast between the world of to-day and that in which its action passes, no other of Morris's tales invests its dream-scene with such home-like verisimilitude. And the speech made by John Ball at the village cross is not only an outspoken proclamation of Morris's personal creed but one of the finest pieces of English prose that have ever been written.

News from Nowhere, though taken here out of its due order of date, for it was written alongside of the *Roots of the Mountains*, is rightly to be considered next, as it was the second and last of the propagandist romances, having been written as *John Ball* was, in weekly instalments for publication in the *Commonweal*. In essence an Utopia, in origin it was a counterblast to the *Looking Backward* of Edward Bellamy, which Morris regarded as being far nearer to a damning indictment than to an attractive presentment of Socialism. It was made a vehicle as he went along for his reflections upon things present as well as upon things future, and in general scheme is a journey through the friendly and familiar scenes of his daily life, seen as he would have them and peopled by men and women as he desired they should be. The journey ends most fittingly and prophetically at Kelmscott, "the type of the pleasant places of the earth," where he is now sleeping his last sleep.

Next after *John Ball* came the *House of the Wolfings* (1888) and the *Roots of the Mountains* (1889), which have been dealt with already, and would be out of place here had they not, as they were not reprinted at the Kelmscott Press. The *Glittering Plain* followed, and of this the *Saturday Review* said that its "manner of telling is to us at least quite charming, and we pity the person who is so disconcerted by a few mannerisms as not to be able to taste it. The interest is kept up from the first to the last page, the characters are sufficient and happily contrasted, and there is by a long way more real knowledge of human nature than in the elaborate fretwork of modernity

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which it is the fashion to admire. What matter that there is much fighting, much love-making, and not a little sheer eating and drinking? To fight heartily and to love heartily, not neglecting at proper (and frequent) times the equal banquet, how good is it! For these things are among temporal things in a way eternal, and the other things among temporal things are so plus-quam-temporal!"

Next in order of publication, but not strictly so in order of writing, for the writing of the *Well at the World's End* was begun before and went on side by side with it, was the *Wood beyond the World*. This was taken by some of the reviewers as an allegory, perhaps because they had *John Ball* and *News from Nowhere* in their minds, could not yet imagine Morris as other than propagandist, and with a little "make-believe" might very well read a "lesson" into the story. Morris at once repudiated any such interpretation, saying in a letter to the *Spectator*: "I had not the least intention of thrusting an allegory into the *Wood beyond the World*; it is meant for a tale pure and simple, with nothing didactic about it. If I have to write or speak on social problems, I always try to be as direct as I possibly can be. On the other hand, I should consider it bad art in any one writing an allegory not to make it clear from the first that this was his intention, and not to take care throughout that the allegory and the story should interpenetrate, as does the great master of allegory, Bunyan."

The *Athenæum*, not one of those which fell into this error, said: "It is an extremely interesting fact that Mr. Morris, in exercising his rare poetical gift, has so often of late turned from metrical to unmetrical forms. Though his romances must needs be taken as being in some measure the outcome of his studies in Saga literature, they hold, in conception no less than in execution, a place of their own. If the name of metreless poem can properly be given to any form of imaginative literature, these romances are more fully entitled to the name than anything that has gone before. . . . This last exquisite story of his must be held to surpass the best of its predecessors in poetical feeling and poetical colour, and to equal them in poetical substance. Here, more abundantly than ever, we get that marvellously youthful way of confronting the universe which is the special feature of Mr. Morris's genius. It is not

easy to realize that it is other than a poet in the heyday of his glorious youth who tells with such gusto this wonderful story. . . . By the side of this exhaustless creator of youthful and lovely things, the youngest of the poets who have just appeared above the horizon seems faded and jaded."

Like several others of his tales, *Child Christopher* (1895) was first conceived in verse, and a beginning made, but the manuscript went astray. It was again begun in verse, but after a very few lines had been written Morris threw the fragment aside, being about to light his pipe with it when it was rescued, and started again in prose. As it stands, it exemplifies his method of making an old story his own: "Read it through, then shut the book and write it out again as a new story for yourself." A man might take what he liked from another, said he, provided that he made it his own. Taking the theme and outline of the ancient *Lay of Havelok the Dane*, he transmuted and re-created the characters and incidents, investing them with an altogether new atmosphere and feeling.

Published in 1896, the *Well at the World's End* had been begun so far back as 1892, and in the interval had progressed by fits and starts, separated by long stretches of other work, so slowly that Morris nicknamed it "The Interminable." No sign of haste or interruption mars it, however, and it stands out as the crowning prose masterpiece of his creative life. Near to it stands the *Roots of the Mountains*, but nothing can rival it.

Swinburne declared in the *Nineteenth Century* that "the creative gift of Mr. Morris, his distinctive gift of imagination, cannot be defined or appreciated by any such test of critical comparison as is applicable to the work of any other man. He is himself alone, and so absolutely that his work can no more be likened to any medieval than to any contemporary kinsman's. . . . Readers and lovers (the terms should here be synonymous) of his former tales and poems in prose will expect to find in this masterpiece—for a perfect and unique masterpiece it is—something that will remind them less of *Child Christopher* than of the *Wood beyond the World*: the mere likeness in the titles would suggest so much: and this I think they will not fail to find: but I am yet more certain that the quality of this work is even finer and stronger than that of either. The interest, for those who bring with them to the reading of a work of imagination any

auxiliary or sympathetic imagination of their own, is deeper and more vivid as well as more various: but the crowning test and triumph of the author's genius will be recognized in the all but unique power of touching with natural pathos the alien element of magical or supernatural fiction. . . . The perfect simplicity and the supreme nobility of the spirit which informs and pervades and quickens and exalts [this magically beautiful tale] must needs make any but an inept and incapable reader feel yet once more a sense of wonder at the generation which could imagine a difference and a contrast between simple and noble. The simplest English writer of our time is also the noblest; and the noblest by reason and by virtue of his sublime simplicity of spirit and of speech. If the English of the future are not utterly unworthy and irredeemably unmindful of the past, they will need no memorial to remind them that his name was William Morris."

A writer as widely removed from Swinburne by temperament and by training as are the Poles in space, H. G. Wells, had this to say in the *Saturday Review*: "It is Malory, enriched and chastened by the thought and learning of six centuries, this story of Ralph and his Quest of the Well at the World's End. It is Malory, with the glow of the dawn of the Twentieth Century warming his tapestries and beaten metal. It is Malory, but instead of the mystic Grail, the search for long life and the beauty of strength. . . . The book is to be read, not simply for pleasure. To those who write, its pages will be a purification; it is full of clean strong sentences and sweet old words. . . . And all the workmanship of the book is stout oaken stuff that must needs endure, and preserve the memory of one of the stoutest, cleanest lives that has been lived in these latter days."

The *Water of the Wondrous Isles*, written in 1895, published in 1897, and the *Sundering Flood*, written in 1896, published in 1898, are magnificent stories, in all ways up to the level of their predecessors, excepting the *Roots of the Mountains* and the *Well at the World's End*, but were and still are overshadowed by the last named, to the level of which not even Morris himself could attain more than once in a lifetime. And the *Sundering Flood* also suffers from the fact that it was necessarily printed from an uncorrected manuscript, and without the author's supervision. Indeed, the pen dropped from his hand before

the manuscript was complete, and the last few pages had to be written down from his dictation.

Gothic Architecture, his only prose work to be printed at the Kelmscott Press which was not a story, original or translated, was one of Morris's lectures, delivered before the Arts and Crafts Society in 1889, printed in response to a wide appeal for a book of his printing that could be bought at a low price.

Of his translations, *Beowulf* is in verse, and at the best but a qualified success, being an attempt at a wholly unrealizable achievement. The original text is not only mutilated and incomplete, but what is left of it is corrupt. Even if it were complete and uncorrupted, the tongue in which it is written is more archaic than that of any other fragment remaining to us in any of the languages that are ancestral to English, while the allusions are more clueless and the incidents and atmosphere more foreign to the modern mind than those of the Elder Edda. To Morris the story, or what remains of it, was intelligible and interesting, but not even he could render it in terms that are intelligible to any but a highly trained reader.

Nearer to our own time, and translated into a prose that delightfully preserves the savour of the old French in which they were first written, are the four stories—*King Florus*, *Amis and Amile*, *Emperor Coustans* and *Over Sea*—taken from a little volume, *Nouvelles Françoises en prose du XIIIe siècle*, published at Paris by Jannet in 1856, which from its first appearance had been a familiar friend and a source of inspiration. From the story of the Emperor Coustans grew that of "The Man born to be King," one of the poems included in the *Earthly Paradise*. From that of Amys and Amile came another poem, "Amys and Amillion," written for inclusion in the *Earthly Paradise* but finally rejected. Published along with its original, *l'Ordene de Chevalerie*, as the second part of the *Order of Chivalry*, is "The Ordination of Knighthood," a translation into short couplets of a French poem of the 13th century, which may or may not have inspired the prose treatise translated by Caxton.

Of the original works by English authors, ranging in date from Chaucer to Swinburne, which Morris reprinted at the Kelmscott Press, nothing more need be said, excepting for two of them, than that they illustrate and justify the catholicity of his taste. The exceptions are: the chapter on the Nature of

Gothic, reprinted from *The Stones of Venice* by John Ruskin; and the works of Geoffrey Chaucer.

Read before the end of his first year at Oxford, Ruskin gave him the lead he needed towards co-ordinating and understanding the philosophy—philosophy, that is, as a method of life, and not in the current sense as a systematization of abstract notions, which have lost all contact with experience—the philosophy which underlay his instinctive acceptance of Gothic and fierce rejection of Renaissance architecture; a reason for his likes and enmities in art, a reason which became increasingly reasonable, valid and conclusive, as his historical knowledge and practical working experience deepened and widened. When he spoke of Ruskin as his Master, as he sometimes did —just as, in other moods or at other moments, he would speak of Carlyle, or Keats, or Chaucer, in the same way—it meant no more than this, that Ruskin had greatly aided him in clarifying and developing his youthful ideas, and had helped him along the road he must have travelled in any case. He never forgot for an instant the debt he owed Ruskin for doing this, and the very first book undertaken after he had gained confidence in the resources of the Press was Ruskin's *Nature of Gothic*.

Chaucer he had known and loved as a schoolboy, and Chaucer had been more than a Master to him before he had even heard of Ruskin. Chaucer was a friend who reached out a hand to him across the centuries, leading him through the scenes and introducing him to the folk of that uncommercialized England he so dearly loved and so deeply regretted. And the Kelmscott *Chaucer* was to him far more of a monument, erected in reverent affection, and in recognition of a life-long debt, than a personal achievement in book-printing.

Caxton's translations had a twofold attraction for him: first and foremost as interesting story-books, and secondly as examples of strong and living, though rather formless, English; modern English in the making. The *Golden Legend* is also a storehouse of medieval tradition and religious thought, as well as of much folk-lore and many varied marvels. Of the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* he wrote: "It makes a thoroughly amusing story, instinct with medieval thought and manners. For, though written at the end of the Middle Ages and dealing with classical mythology, it has in it no token of

the coming Renaissance, but is purely medieval. It is the last issue of that story of Troy which through the whole of the Middle Ages had such a hold on men's imaginations; the story built up from a rumour of the Cyclic Poets, of the heroic city of Troy, defended by Priam and his gallant sons, led by Hector the *Preux Chevalier*, and beset by the violent and brutal Greeks, who were looked on as the necessary machinery for bringing about the undeniable tragedy of the fall of the city. Surely this is well worth reading, if only as a piece of undiluted medieval-ism." *Reynard the Foxe* he declared to be one of the very best of Caxton's works as to style, "and being translated from a kin-dred tongue [the Dutch] is delightful as mere language. In its rude joviality, and simple and direct delineation of character, it is a thoroughly good representative of the famous ancient Beast Epic." *Godefrey of Boloyne* is not only interesting in it-self, but is doubly so as a record of one of those earth-shaking events, the Crusades, and of the carving out of the shortlived Latin kingdoms in the East. It has a further value, in that it shows what medieval chivalry actually was in the real world, and not as it is represented by poets and storytellers in a world of imagination.

Sidonia the Sorceress, first read by him in the little volumes (Nos. 29/30) of Simm's & MacIntyre's Parlour Library when he was a boy, "is an historical romance, based more or less on fact, concerning the witch fever that afflicted Northern Europe during the latter half of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries. It was written by William Meinhold, a Lutheran minister, dwelling in the island of Rugen, off the shore of Pomerania, a man so steeped in the history of his country dur-ing the period abovementioned, that he might almost be said to have been living in it, rather than in his own, the early part of the present [19th] century. The result of his life and literary genius was the production of two books: *The Amber Witch* and *Sidonia the Sorceress*, both of which, but, in my judgement, especially *Sidonia*, are almost faultless reproductions of the life of the past; not mere antiquarian studies, but presentments of events, the actors in which are really alive, though under con-ditions so different from those of the present day. In short, *Sidonia* is a masterpiece of its kind, and without a rival of its kind. It must be added that it was a great favourite with the

more literary part of the Pre-Raphaelite artists in the earlier days of the movement.''

Froissart stood alongside of Chaucer in the very front rank of his cherished friends, and the Kelmscott Press *Froissart*, had it been completed as planned, would have challenged comparison—primacy, it may be—as a printed book with the *Chaucer* itself. Upon the text, at Morris's desire, I had spent much time and care, and was to have spent much more. Basing myself upon Lord Berners' translation, and preserving its tone, spelling and style, I was to allow for the fact that the manuscript from which he worked was not only that of an early version, but probably damaged in places and certainly corrupt, as well as for the further facts that the translation was a slovenly and careless one, and that names of persons and places had been transcribed with a reckless disregard of accuracy that frequently rendered them unrecognizable without reference to the original. Every place and person would have had to be identified, and names properly given, with certain exceptions: Sir Walter Manny, for instance, had come to be so intimately a part of English tradition that he was not to be turned back into Gaultier de Mauny. Not only were gaps to be filled, but as Froissart re-wrote and amplified his chronicle from time to time, any desirable additions from the later versions were to be worked into our edition. One of these additions, from the uncompleted manuscript now in the Vatican, written after the chronicler had left the English service for that of Gaston de Foix, and therefore felt free to speak out his real mind as to the English people, particularly delighted Morris, who translated it with a running pen when I brought it to his attention. As the fragment is of historical interest, giving the attitude of a medieval French aristocrat when faced by the comparatively free condition of the common folk in England, and their characteristically democratic temper, and as the book in which it was to appear will never now be printed, I give it here:

"Englishmen are of marvellous conditions, hot and boiling, speedily moved to ire, tardily appeased and brought to mood of mildness. They delight and comfort them in battles and manslayings. Covetous and envious be they over greatly of the goods of another, and they may not join them perfectly nor

naturally in the love nor alliance of an alien nation, and covert they be and orgillous. And in especial under the sun is no more perilous people than the men labouring such as be in England. And much greatly in England is diversity betwixt the nature and conditions of noble men and men labouring and villeins; for the gentlemen be of noble and loyal conditions, and the common people is of felonous, perilous, proud and disloyal conditions. And whensoever the common people will show their felony and puissance the noble men may not endure before them. But they have been of a long while of good accord together; for the noble men demand not of the people but that which is of all reason. Withal the people will not suffer them to take without paying so much as an egg or an hen. The men of craft and the labourers throughout England live of that which they wot how to work, and the gentlemen of their rents and revenues: and if the King summoneth them they pay therewith; not that the King may taile his people in no wise, nor the people would not have it nor suffer it. There be certain ordinances and pactions assessed on the staple of wools, and thereof is the King aided over and above his rents and revenues; and when as he maketh war the said paction is doubled. England is the land the best guarded of the world; otherwise they might not nor know how to live, and it behoveth a King, who is their lord, to ordain for them and to turn him much to their will. And if he doth the contrary, and evil come of it, ill will they take it of him, even as they did to that King Edward whereof I speak now, who was the son of the good King Edward.''

Syr Percyvelle de Gales, *Sire Degrevaunt* and *Syr Ysambrace* are stories taken from another favourite of his youth, a small volume edited by J. O. Halliwell and published by the Camden Society in 1858. They are metrical romances or ballad-narratives, translated from the Norman-French, collected and transcribed by Robert Thornton of East Newton, in Yorkshire, about 1440, the manuscript being now in the library of Lincoln Cathedral. Morris took much joy in one of the earlier stanzas of *Syr Percyvelle de Gales*, in which it is told of the hero that:

> "He drank water of the well,
> And *yet* was he wight!"

inſtruit et tytum:et philemonem p̃ fugitiuo
famulo dep̃cat̃:ſup quo melius tacere pũ=
to:q̃ pauca ſcribē. Actus aplo̅ꝝ nudā qui=
dē vid̅ur ſonare hiſtoriā ꝣ naſc̅etis eccleſie
infantiā texere: ſ̃ ſi nouerimus ſcp̃toꝛē eo=
rū lucam eſſe medicū. cuius laus ē in euan=
gelio: aïa aduertimus p̃ter om̃ia verba illius
anime languentis eſſe medicinā. Jacobus.
petrus.iohānes.iudas. ſept̄e epłas edide=
runt tam miſticas q̃ ſuccinctas. et breues
pariter ꝛ longas:breues in verbis. longaſ
in ſententiis: ut rarus ſit qui non in earum
cecutiat lectōne. Apocalipſis iohis tot ba=
bet ſacram̄eta quot verba. Parū dixi:et pro
merito voluminis laus om̃is inferioꝛ eſt Jn
verbis ſingulis. multiplices lat̄et intellige=

Finit liber dictus Speculū vite humane. qꝛ in co et
ceſarea poteſtas. ꝯ regalis dignitas. bubulcoꝝ etiaꝫ
genus ſibi ſpeculaꝛ ſalubettima ſił ſpiritualiſꝙ vite
viros ſecū aduebens. papam ſꝫ cardinales. arciep̃os.
clericos ꝛ ceteros eaꝛie miniſtros:rectā ꝛ bis ſpeculādi
p̃ſcribendo noꝛmā. a Ginthero zainer ex Keutlingen
ciui progenito. vꝛbe aūt cōmanenti Auguſtenſi:arte
impꝛeſſoꝛia in mediū feliciter deditus:Anno a partu
virginis ſalutifeꝛo Ꝕileſimo quaꝛꝛingenteſimo ſep=
tuageſimopꝛimo:ꝗ dus vero Januarias tercio.

Books printed for friends were: Wilfrid Blunt's *Love Lyrics and Songs of Proteus*, J. W. Mackail's *Biblia Innocentium*, and the *De Contemptu Mundi* of Savonarola, printed from the original manuscript for Charles Fairfax Murray.

Books printed for publishers were: Wardrop's translation from the Georgian of the *Book of Wisdom and Lies*, for Quaritch; Tennyson's *Maud*, for Macmillans; and Rossetti's *Hand and Soul*, reprinted from the *Germ*, for Way & Williams of Chicago. This last was the one book of which copies were especially printed for America.

VIII

ACHIEVEMENT

MOST assuredly there was no conscious element of "propaganda" in Morris's determination to go in for book-printing. Looked at in retrospect, however, it would really seem as though there must have been something more than a mere coincidence in his turning at this time to the one art not yet practised by him, and bending his great powers to its mastery. In all the other domestic arts he had proven by personal effort that good work might still be done if it were but honestly and without reservation attempted. A long and hard experience had shown that preaching was relatively ineffective and agitation a waste of time, at least for him, in face of an apathetic populace and an unreformed environment; and his disillusionment in this regard had been completed by the disruption of the Socialist League, and the collapse of the *Commonweal*. His temperament forbade his participation in party manœuvring and political intrigue on the one hand, or in "gas and water Socialism" on the other. That which he did must be done in the light of day, without compromise or diplomacy, and that which he said must be said as definitely as words would allow, without mental reservation or any concession to vote-catching possibilities; and he could summon up no enthusiasm for local or partial attempts at the palliation of the more obtrusive miseries of society, while allowing what were for him the main evils to remain untouched. This he held to be tinkering with symptoms instead of attacking disease.

Then, although the fact was as yet unsuspected and remained unknown until too late, his titan strength had been overtaxed by his arduous and long-continued labours as an

"agitator," unaccompanied and uncompensated for by any mitigation of his creative activities in many fields, and his constitution undermined by repeated attacks of influenza. Neither he nor anyone among those around him realized that his life was already on the wane; three years later, as we have seen, the *Athenæum* could still speak of his perennial youthfulness. Nor did he despair as to the ultimate and speedy, though disillusioned as to the immediate, success of the endeavour "to make this world a beautiful and happy place" in which he had played such a prominent part. Indeed, upon this point, as Clutton Brock has written: "Everyone now, except the very stupid, knows that this world is less beautiful and less happy than it might be. We have all lost the Victorian complacency which was so like despair. We do not believe in the mechanical action of progress, or that our civilization has been freed for ever from the peril and beauty of the past; we know that it can only be preserved from peril and restored to beauty by the constant exercise of our own wills; we have both a conviction of sin and a hope of salvation; and we owe both to William Morris more than to any other single man."

Looking back upon his rounded life, seen as it now is from a distance, one cannot help feeling that, dissatisfied with precept, and however unconscious that his future years were to be but few, he gave all the remaining time and strength at his disposal to providing an example and a proof, concrete and unmistakable, of the practicality of his theories and the truth of his contentions.

Nobody nowadays can dispute the massive reality of his contributions to the beauty of life, or cavil at the claim that his influence upon taste and thought has been both widespread and permanent. "The last quarter of the 19th century will always remain a memorable period, if only by reason of the artistic revival which has distinguished it above its fellows," wrote A. L. Cotton in an article already quoted from. "If, indeed, we are still far from having attained the ideal looked forward to by William Morris, that Utopian commonwealth in which our workmen shall be artists and our artists workmen, at least the initial difficulty has been overcome, and the first step taken in the right direction. . . . Despite ourselves, perhaps, our views in matters of art have undergone a steady

revolution. The change has been largely imperceptible, but has been lasting in effect. There is hardly a single object in daily and habitual use among us which has not, in some way, received the impress of the movement inaugurated by [him]." Before he commenced printer, however, there was one "single object in daily and habitual use" that had not been affected by the movement which owed its origin and impetus to Morris, and that was the printed book.

A rough idea of the state of book-printing in 1888 has been given in a previous chapter, but no adequate notion of the depths to which it had fallen, or the apparent hopelessness of its position, can possibly be formed without an examination of the books that were then being printed. To-day, though there is, unhappily, a great deal to be done still, and the commercial book-printer has only indirectly been touched by Morris's teaching or example, more books are being decently produced than at any other time since the 16th century. Morris's achievement, then, has been threefold: he has left us an imperishable treasure in the books printed by himself; he set up a precedent that has been extensively followed; and he inaugurated a reform which will in the end affect the whole of the western world, and has already affected a great part of it, leading sometimes to developments at which he would have roared with rage or laughter, stultified oftentimes by the inherent reaction of industrialism or the craze for "self-expression," but never losing ground on a large scale, and gaining solidity and force as it goes.

There had been private presses in England before Morris founded his, but none of them had seriously influenced the general practice of book-printing. Walpole's books from Strawberry Hill were neither better nor worse than those of the trade-printer of his time. The Rev. Mr. Daniels of Oxford, Morris's immediate predecessor, though more ambitious and far more successful, contented himself with reviving the 17th century Fell types, and accepting what paper and ink he could find upon the market. Nobody until Morris did so had returned to the origin of book-printing, attacked the problem of planning and making a book as a whole and in detail, or studied the contributory crafts—the designing, cutting and casting of type, the making of paper and vellum, and so on—

and either practised them himself or directed and supervised their practice by others, with a comprehensive eye to their function and value as factors telling towards the success or failure of the *book*. Let the importance of his material triumphs be belittled, the beauty of his books disputed, the validity of his teaching either by practice or precept be denied, there would yet remain to his credit that he was the pioneer in these respects, and a pioneer who has inspired many notable successors to attempt and achieve great things, things that were unthinkable until he had shown them to be within the limits of practicability. In this place it would be an impertinence, even if it lay with me, to appraise the work or discriminate between the merits of the private and semi-private presses which have continued to keep open the road of experiment and improvement inaugurated by Morris. But I may be allowed to claim that at no period, since the earliest printers were confronted with the manifold possibilities of a new and fascinating art, have there been so many disinterested, nobly conceived and successful attempts at coping with the problems and extending the triumphs of the printer's craft as during the years that have elapsed since the closing of the Kelmscott Press.

When one turns to book-printing in general, the printing of books as an industry, the change wrought by Morris is evident, real and wide-reaching, though by no means universal. Though good book-printing is far more possible, and far better book-printing being done, than in pre-Kelmscott days, the forces of reaction are as powerful as ever, and, indeed, have been reinforced by certain wouldbe and well-intentioned reformers; there are crying abuses to be remedied, stupidities to be overcome, errors to be corrected, and this must continue to be so until many other evils have been redressed. But there is no reason, other than those afforded by ignorance or by inertia, why still more good and still better book-printing should not now and at once be done, even under the conditions which obtain.

Of course, the commercial book-printer is and must continue to be handicapped, though he need not be paralysed, by these conditions, and it would obviously be unfair to demand of him that he should equal the productions of a private press, working in freedom from the restrictions of the market-place.

For him to aim at a standard higher than that which prevails in the market-place is to incur the contemptuous enmity, and invite the imitative and pricecutting competition, of those for whom there is no nobler incentive than money-snatching. And the public taste, though better than it was, is too inchoate and uncertain to impose a definite level of excellence, below which his printing might only fall at his peril; nor can he count upon the support of more than an intelligent and tasteful minority among publishers. While he may, and often does, make a place for himself, attracting a public of his own, he is uneasily conscious that his public may only be supporting him because he is "different," being ready to desert him to-morrow in favour of a rival who is "different" after a more flamboyant or eccentric fashion. And all the time he is being tempted—or, too often, compelled by circumstances—to lessen the effect of his work and lower the taste of his public, deflower his best letter, his most careful and skilful make-up and presswork, through their use for publicity. It is a regrettable fact that, from the purely technical point of view, no better printing is being done to-day than that which is devoted to the purposes of advertisement, because "there is money in it."

Morris refused absolutely to allow his type or ornaments to be utilized in this way. The advertising-men who made him large offers were offended by his obstinate and, to them, incomprehensible, refusal. They understood his attitude as little as did the inkmakers, of whom he demanded a better ink than they were prepared to supply, imagining that it meant enmity to advertising in itself, and regarding his refusal as a slight upon their profession. It cannot be pretended that Morris felt any respect or admiration for advertisement in itself, or looked upon it otherwise than as one of the phases of latterday commercialism. But his refusal raised no question as to the morality or desirability of advertising, as things are, nor as to the duty of a printer, if he print publicity-stuff at all, to print it as well as ever he can. It was based entirely upon another consideration, in his eyes a grave one: that the employment of given material and a given style to advocate the buying of this or that, reduces their value and militates against their effect when they are applied to a more dignified purpose.

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If a certain letter, for example, come to be familiarly associated with alarm-clocks or underclothing, it must necessarily be less effective when employed upon a noble poem or one of the stories or plays which count among the enduring glories of the world.   Not only have its intrinsic merits been obscured, if not obliterated, by the trivialities with which the reader cannot help connecting it, but, what is worse, its lower associations reflect upon all other work in which it appears. The most enthusiastic devotee of advertising can hardly claim that it conduces to the due effect of the *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Holy Living and Dying* to read them in a type and get-up which irresistibly recalls the flavour of canned peaches, the durability of a motor-tyre, or the bargain sales of some Élite Emporium.

Not that the decision on this point wholly rests with the individual printer; though he himself may rigidly refuse to venalize his material and his talents, there is nothing to protect him from an unscrupulous competitor, who stands ready to parody his best work, turning to account all that he has given to honouring some great author on behalf of a mail-order house or even some fraudulent oil company. It is practically impossible for him to have a distinctive letter of his own, to be sternly reserved for his less ephemeral and more dignified productions, for work in which he can take pride and upon which he can stake his reputation, while a make-up, once made public, is open to the world. To obtain a new letter, or any letter at all, he must go to a big firm of typefounders, as the "little master" who cut his punches and cast his type, like Howard, is dead; the punchcutter, like E. P. Prince, who was a free craftsman and frequently an artist, has followed him; and the machinery for cutting punches and casting type is beyond the reach of a single man or a small company. So long as a printer must be content with type which is available at a price to anybody, he may himself restrict the use of a letter to some chosen purpose, but is unable to guard himself against the vulgarity of his rivals. Whether this need mean that any book-printer resign himself to doing less than his best is for the individual to decide.

It is, of course, expecting a good deal of the average printer, or the average business man of any kind, bred up in a commercial atmosphere, trained under industrial conditions, and

accustomed to accept the limitations of the market as though these were fixed and inherent in the nature of things, to ask that he shall stand outside of and above his habitual round, facing that which has become a second nature as though it were new to him. Yet, if he is to understand what Morris taught and was, or profit by what Morris did for him, this and no less is exactly what he must do. In order to do it, he must needs follow Morris's example, centre his thought upon the *book* as an organic entity, take the *book* as pivot of inquiry and research, of practice and experiment, subordinating all other considerations to the welfare of the BOOK.

If he succeed in doing this, and in the measure of his success, he will be delivered from the influence of one or two prevalent fallacies. The worst and most widespread of these is that, seeing he is compelled to print by machine, he must study the machine before all, and plan his book in such a way as to bring it well within the capabilities of the plant and machinery at his disposal. In thinking thus, however, he is thinking in terms of topsyturveydom, exalting the instrument at the expense of the outcome, the means at the expense of the end, *kultur* at the expense of culture. For the machine is no more than an instrument, and not in the last resort the most indispensable instrument, utilized for book-production. It is at once an aid and a hindrance towards the attainment of that end; an aid in so far as it facilitates production in quantity and with speed; a hindrance in so far as it achieves this at the cost of quality in the product, restricting the range of choice with regard to type and paper and ink, barring the best of each by its inability to deal with the best. Morris installed the hand-press for his work, and not a machine. He found that his letter would have to be thinned, his paper softened and his ink diluted, thereby destroying the beauty of his book, were he to submit himself to the limitations thought by ordinary printers to be imposed by the machine. That his choice was reluctantly made cannot for a moment be pretended; for he knew that hand-work means doing one's utmost as a man, with tools which aid the work without eliminating or lessening the manhood of the worker; that, as he often said, anything which intervenes between the hand and its work is bad for both; and that the machine, if taken as more than a

Englishmen are of marvellous Conditions, hot and boiling, speedily moved to ire tardily appeased and brought to mood of mildness. They delight and comfort them in battles and manslayings. Covetous and envious be they over greatly of the good of another, and they may not join them perfectly nor naturally in the love nor alliance of an alien nation and covert they be and orgillous. And in especial to no more perilous people than the men labouring such as be in England. And much greatly in England is there diversity betwixt the nature and conditions of noble men and of men labouring and villains, for the gentlemen be of noble and loyal Conditions, and the common people is of felonous perilous and proud Conditions. And whensoever the common people will shew their felony and puissance the noble men may not endure before them. But they have been of a long while of good accord together; for the noble men demand not of the people, but that which is of all reason. Withal the people will not suffer them to take without paying so much as an egg or an hen. The men of craft and the labourers live throughout England live of that which they wot how to work, and the gentlemen of their rents and revenues. And if the King summoneth them they pay therewith, not that the King may taile his people in nowise, nor the people would not have it nor suffer it. There be certain ordinances and factions assessed on the staple of wools, and thereof is the King aided over and above his rents and revenues; and whenso he maketh war that said faction is doubled.

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tool, if accepted as the prime factor, entails the dehumanization of the workman, until the work is no longer that of a tool-armed man but that of a "hand"-aided machine.

Although the machine be inevitable under industrial conditions, and the hand-press out of the question for a book-printer to whom book-printing is a business, this need not mean that he contentedly reverse the true position of affairs, take the machine as his arbiter of excellence and forget that it is but an instrument, an extremely imperfect instrument, for the production of a beautiful book, of which he is to make the best he can, always demanding more than it can yet give, striving after the unattainable. Nor need it mean, as it so often does, that because he is using a complex and costly contrivance, into the perfecting of which many other men's brains have been put, he should imagine himself to stand upon a higher intellectual and artistic level than his fathers, for whom there was no such resource. If he will but compare fifteenth century books, or those produced within the last thirty years by similar methods, with machine-printed books, his own or those of others, he will be driven to admit, however grudgingly, that, even if he dare to claim superiority for the latter, that superiority is not commensurate with the inventive ingenuity and long-continued endeavour which have gone into an up-to-date machine press; and he will find it hard to account for the small margin of the pretended superiority, relatively to the enormous improvement in appliances, without confessing that he and his like are inferior as men and as book-printers to the men who wrought such magnificent results with such comparatively primitive tools.

A similar fallacy or confusion of means with end, affecting a printer's choice of letter, is that upon which a heresy was erected by Charles Ricketts and adopted with enthusiasm by wouldbe modernists: that inasmuch as a necessary step towards the casting of type is cutting punches in steel, the letter must be conceived as being cut in metal, and as a consequence owe nothing to pen-written precedent or the traditions of handwriting. Morris, as has been described in its place, returned to the tradition followed by the great Italian printers, conceiving his letter as they did upon the established lines of calligraphy. Every good letter, for him, was derived in greater

or less degree from the pen, and the more obvious the relationship, the more likely was the letter to be good. Ricketts—logically, as he fondly supposed—imagined his characters in terms of metal-cutting, holding that he was thereby freed from restraints imposed by the pen, which were to be replaced by those inherent in the material upon which he supposed himself to be at work. Hitherto, the question has been discussed as though it were merely a quarrel over two equally-valid conventions, and even some of those who ought to have known better have hesitated as to which convention they should accept. By taking the *book* as their criterion, however, and remembering that the book is essentially no more and no less than an instrument for the conveyance of articulate speech in its written form from the hand of a writer to the eye of a reader, they would, I think, be speedily convinced that the metal-cutting heresy arises from and rests upon a two-fold fallacy. First, there is a confusion of terms, caused by the common but ambiguous use of "type" for the letter as it stands upon the page, as well as for the "type" which impresses it upon the paper. Second, a double confusion of means with end; for, when all is said and done, the cut-metal punch is but a means towards the production of cast-metal type, and the cast-metal type, in its turn, but a means towards the production of readable words upon paper. To determine the form and character of the letter in accordance with the procedure of metal-cutting is, therefore, not merely to raise the means to a greater importance than the end, but to do so at a double remove.

"The eye, after all, is the sovereign judge of form," and, provided that the eye be satisfied as to the legibility and beauty of the letter, the means and method of producing that letter are of small or no account. Though the letter be cut in stone, engraved upon metal or wood, written upon paper or parchment with a pen—reed, quill, steel or gold—painted upon wood or canvas with a brush, or printed upon paper or vellum from type, its convention or traditional accord with convenience is determined by the *eye*, and not by the tool employed for its production. To the eye, indeed, the letter itself is but a means to an end, the formation of words; and to the reader's brain behind the eye, the words are but a means towards the conveyance of a message from the mind of a writer to his own. No

matter what has happened in the interval, the position is essentially the same as it was when the written book first came into being: on one side is the writer, with his pen in his hand, and on the other is the reader, with his book before his eyes.

Through the interposition of the printer, with his press and his type, and the rest, dependent upon other specialists for everything he uses, many things and many men have come to stand between the writer and the book, but nothing stands between the book and the reader. Set apart as he personally is from the finished book, the writer is not only deprived of direct access to the reader, but of the flexibility and freedom of expression through form as well as through substance that were his as of right when there was nothing but the pen between his hand and the page which reached the reader's eye. It was an intuitive recognition of the loss thus incurred which led to Morris's momentary recoil as the Press came into being: "I couldn't help lamenting the simplicity of the scribe and his desk, and his black ink and blue and red ink, and I almost felt ashamed of my press after all."

Though the interval between the penman and the final page has been lengthened, however, and the connexion between writer and reader thereby weakened, through the increasing introduction of machinery at all stages of book-making, the connexion is there still. However much the number of machines, and therefore of mechanicalized men, has been multiplied by the specialization of processes, and the chain thereby lengthened, we still have the human mind and heart at one end of the chain, expressing itself through the human hand, and the human mind and heart at the other, impressed by the thought and feeling conveyed to it through the eye. Our endeavour should therefore be to think and plan in terms of the *hand* and the *eye* as the determining factors in all problems affecting the *book*, minimizing the resistance of interposed machinery or process, and not to erect that resistance into a desirable barrier, counting the loss of spontaneity and freedom as a gain. It is upon the hand and the eye we must insist, and in consonance with whose requirements we must reform or form our conventions, not upon or according to the accidental properties of any material or tool or appliance.

Handicapped as he is by commercial exigencies, industrial

conditions, lack of discriminative support on the part of publishers or of the public, and the wrongheaded preachings of this or that authority, there is yet much that any book-printer may do towards raising the artistic level of his productions. That is, if he is courageous enough to think things out for himself, is equipped with a fair share of commonsense, and will accept these two considerations to go on with: that it is the *book* which matters; that the *eye*, after all, is the sovereign judge of form. Setting aside all questions of type and paper and printing by machine, there are many gross defects in book-building to-day that may be remedied at once, and at the cost of no more than a little thought and care.

Taking the run of books as they come, there is no more common or glaring defect in the average book than that of a want of rhythmic balance in the opening, the failure of two opposite pages to hang together, the two black masses of letter-press and the margins which surround them forming a pleasant unity through their harmonious reconciliation of repetition and contrast. The two opposite pages are and must be seen together, should appeal to and satisfy the eye at once and together, and it is impossible to make a book beautiful or even passably decent-seeming if this be neglected. By considering each page as though it were to stand alone, and be seen in isolation, a result is obtained by which the eye is offended, and a natural sense of proportion outraged. Taking a single page as the unit, reckoning in the headline as part of it, and then planting the mass of letterpress with mechanical precision in the centre of the page, giving a hard equality to the margins, the opening is made to appear as though it were standing on its head, while the opposing pages look as though they were being driven asunder and stand at odds.

Even when the opening has been duly considered, the headline is a nuisance, is a disastrous addition of ugliness when it has not, and is an indefensible stupidity in any case. Either a reader knows and is interested in what he is reading about or he is not; in the one case, he does not need, and in the second pays no attention to, a constantly repeated reminder of the title or theme of the book he is reading. Upon utilitarian grounds, therefore, there is nothing to be said in defence of the headline from the point of view of the reader; from that of the printer it

might be defended as "fat," a minor fraud upon the purchaser of the book, though that is not a plea to be urged in the high court of taste. Nor can it be pleaded that the headline is decorative, has ever been or can ever be made so; at its best it is a mere excrescence, and at its worst a monstrosity. When combined with one or two other of the weaknesses which beset modern printing, it is intolerable.

Before me lies a pretentiously printed volume, a serious and valuable work upon an important subject, recently and expensively produced, upon which publisher and printer quite obviously pride themselves. Each page is topped with a funereally heavy headline, with a thin black line above it and a thin-and-thick black line below. Then comes the letterpress, in a meagre-faced letter, too much compressed and over-thinned, the words being widely spaced and the lines heavily leaded. The page has been reckoned from the upper thin line of the heading to the lowermost line of the type, and set squarely in the middle of the paper, allowance being made for a "generous" margin. To put it mildly, the opening is crudely horrible, and the separate pages, each with its unescapable headline, looking like a ponderous curtain-rod, its air of time-worn pallor and of tumbling to pieces, of hanging precariously and far too low, remind one in their general appearance of nothing so much as of disintegrating window-blinds. No single element in all this conglomerate of ugliness was forced upon the printer or the publisher by anything else than their common lack of taste and thought.

For the stupidities currently indulged in with regard to misfit illustrations, the printer may fairly repudiate responsibility; but, at the least, he must be held for an accomplice, both before and after the fact, unless he has drawn the attention of publisher and artist to incongruities between illustrations and letterpress, doing what he can to enlist their co-operation in planning and building the book as a concordant whole. Most publishers care as little for the organic unity of the book as does the unenlightened public, and leave the illustrations to the artist, the typography to the printer, failing to ensure or even to ask for a mutual subordination of personal idiosyncrasies to the needs of the *book*. Should they do so, their main difficulty would undoubtedly lie with the artist, who has usually taken

over or worked out a convention that suits him, and is as markedly different as he can make it from that which has been adopted by anybody else. In order to display his originality, he must, as he thinks, be "different" at all costs, and unless he be an artist in the full sense of the term, will refuse to submit his proud neck to the yoke of co-operative effort, as Burne-Jones did without hesitation or afterthought. Upon this point, as upon all others, it is the great man or true artist who can stoop to concede a certain measure of independence without loss of dignity or lessened worth of achievement, or face the required effort with resolute goodwill.

For an effort is unmistakably required of the artist who consents to think of and work for the *book* in the absence of an apprenticeship to so doing. Even among the Kelmscott Press books, there is a case in point, that of the unluckiest of them all in this respect, the twice printed *Glittering Plain*. The first edition of this, and the first book printed at the Press, fell short of Morris's ideal through the lack of harmony and proportion between "bloomers" and body-letter, partly due to the enforced use of initials designed for a larger page, but in part also to the fact that Morris had not yet related their line and tone to those of his letter, as he was able to do after a little more practice and experience. The pioneer of a new field, he had to find his way by trial-and-error. While it is wholly free from this particular defect, the second edition of the *Glittering Plain* is marred by a disagreement between the pictures of Walter Crane and Morris's letter and decorations. Walter Crane's drawings, which are generically Renaissance in character, suffer from, and at the same time avenge, their intrusion upon a Gothic page, and the quarrel of styles is intensified by their striking difference in line and colour from the letterpress with which they are in contact.

Taking what Morris wrote as to illustration in conjunction with what may be deduced from his practice, there are at least four requirements which must be regarded as fundamental for an illustration intended to go with type: (*a*) There should be in it no line much thinner than the thins nor much thicker than the thicks of the body-letter; (*b*) there should be approximately the same ratio of black to white in any one square inch of the drawing that there is in any one square inch of the typo-

graphy; (c) the character and tone of the lines used in the drawing should repeat or "play up to" those of the type in straightness or curvature, no less than in colour; (d) it must be confined within a definite frame or outline. Any one of these fundamentals can only be lost sight of at the expense of beauty, but for the perfection of beauty there must also be a reciprocal sympathy between cut and page that may readily be felt but far from readily described in words.

When all illustrations were engraved on wood, the engraver served as an intermediary between the artist and the printer, unconsciously rather than consciously reconciling the illustration to the letterpress. How great was the rôle he played in this regard, and how suddenly and completely the illustration stood away from the type when he had been superseded, may be studied in the volume of *Punch* which covered the period of transition. In the earlier part of the volume, wood-engraving reigns alone; then for a while there is a growing proportion of process-blocks; finally, the photographic process has relegated wood-engraving for ever to the limbo of dead crafts. There had been little or no community of tradition between artist and wood-engraver for many years; the artist, more and more possessed of a sense of his own importance, had been undergoing the universal prompting towards the assertion of his own individuality, towards what is now called "self-expression," and had come to resent the liberties, as he considered them, taken by the engraver with his work. He rejoiced, therefore, and revelled in his new-found freedom from restraint, his unrestrained ability to develop his own convention and indulge in his own distinctive mannerisms, without regard for or interference from anybody but himself. What had hitherto been open to the original etcher or engraver upon metal was now open to the draughtsman, without any of the apprenticeship or preliminary discipline which these had been compelled to undergo. He took and takes full advantage of the opportunity, and as a result it can hardly be said that book-illustration as an art contributory to the *book* stands higher to-day than it did at its nadir, in the later years of the 18th and earlier years of the 19th century.

On my table is a luxury-book, the text of which is from the pen of a well-known writer, with illustrations from the pencil

of an equally well-known artist, and bearing the imprints of a printer and a publisher of standing. It is printed in a thick-faced letter, grossly over-leaded, while the illustrations have clearly been drawn upon a large scale, in a line which was congruous to that particular scale, without thought or care for what it would be like when reduced, as it has been, to a scale upon which the line looks as though it were that of a dusty spider's web, the whites between the lines having been kept open only through the skill of the printer. Against the grey frailty of the pictures, the lubberly black and white stripes of the typography stand out as an offence, and the discrepancy is emphasized by the refusal of the illustrator to recognize a frame or condescend upon an outline, leaving the printer to fit his type in painful zigzags and staircases to the wilfully erratic form of each drawing. Thus, with a thick black-faced letter to give the plane of the page, and the broken irregularity of the letterpress around them, the lack-lustre illustrations have all the air of being recessed into, or having fallen through, a collapsed and shattered surface.

Had the illustrator cared for aught but his own drawing as it grew under his hand, or given a thought to its appearance when reduced and printed with letterpress; had the publisher cared for anything beyond the saleability of the volume; had the printer been proud enough of his craft to have called their attention to the state of affairs before it was too late: had any one of them possessed an atom of knowledge or good taste, or considered the *look of the book*, they might have produced a seemly volume, one that a man would keep near at hand upon his most-visited shelves, instead of perpetrating an outrage upon good manners—for it is nothing less than that.

Handicapped as all men engaged in book-production may be, there is no excuse for sheer carelessness, and but small excuse for ignorance, now that Morris's work and Morris's teaching are open to all.

Henry Arthur Jones, when presenting a copy of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* to the Library of Harvard University, wrote that it was "the loving handiwork of the greatest man I have known. It may be claimed for William Morris that his reputation would be a high and honourable one if it rested upon any one of his achievements: upon his poetry alone; his tales

The wind's on the wold
and the night is a-cold,
And Thames runs chill
Twixt mead and hill..
But kind and dear
Is the old house here.
And my heart is warm
Midst winter's harm

Rest then and rest
And think of the best
Twixt summer & spring
When all birds sing.
In the town of the tree;
And ye lie in me
And scarce dare move
Lest earth & its love
Should fade away
Ere the full of the day.

I am old & have seen
Many things that have been
Both grief &peace,
And wane and increase;
No tale I tell
Of ill &c well
But this I say
Night treadeth on day
And for worst & best
Right good is rest.

FACSIMILE OF MORRIS'S VERSES FOR EMBROIDERED HANGINGS
FOR HIS BED AT KELMSCOTT

and essays alone; his dyeing alone; his weaving alone; his tapestry alone; his cabinet work alone; his printing alone. In every one of these arts he accomplished the good and faithful work of an ordinary lifetime. He abides with us as a living witness to the essential unity of art; he continually affirms that, like the other two great realities, like religion, like love, it is something that must be bought without money and without price. . . . The main idea of his later years was a hatred of the base commercialism which has degraded the ordinary workman from an artist into a machine, and has cheapened and demoralized and disfigured the whole fabric of modern civilization. But this hatred was not sullen or stagnant; it accompanied an active ceaseless search for a social lever that would again raise the workman into the artist, and thereby bring dignity and simplicity and beauty into ordinary everyday homes."

"He abides with us as a living witness," and more definitely so through the latest enterprise of his earthly life, as it seems to me, than in any other upon which he entered. His wonderful stained glass and his yet more wonderful tapestries are necessarily localized, and cannot be made readily accessible to many, even when they are housed in public institutions and open to all comers. His woven and printed stuffs, his furniture and wallpapers, despite the soundness of their material and the stability of their colouring, are innately perishable and exposed to the depreciation and accidents entailed by usage. His written works, though his poetry prove to be as imperishable as that of Homer or of Shakespeare, his romances as those of Sir Walter Scott or Dumas or Dickens, his essays upon art and life as those of Ruskin or Carlyle, must suffer as these have done from the limitations of language, and in any case can appeal only to those who are capable of sustained attention and articulate thought. But his printed books are appreciable by all those who have eyes to see with, and their message is intelligible in all tongues.

Though the demand for sets of the Kelmscott Press books may continue, and many sets be hoarded in comparative secrecy by mere collectors, set after set is finding a safe and accessible refuge in a library which is not a collector's book-museum, or the private playground of a cataloguer, but a veri-

table home of learning, opened hospitably to the student. Then, if it comes to that, no more than a hundred-and-fifty "complete sets" can ever be made up, the number of copies printed of *De Contemptu Mundi*; thus ensuring that single copies or a few will always be findable by a devotee—that is, until the far day when all shall have passed into national or communal possession. And it needs but the sight—or, still better, the handling—of a single Kelmscott Press book to convince any bookman or printer, tinged with artistry, that here is a standard of attainable excellence, a milestone and a finger-post upon the secular path of book-printing.

A standard of comparison by which to judge contemporary work, one's own or that of another, but not a model to be slavishly imitated; a milestone to mark progress, but not a terminal barrier to bring it to an end; a finger-post indicating the direction in which an advance may be made, but not an imperative command to go along one particular path to the exclusion of all others, or to do so upon any other than our own feet. To set up the Kelmscott Press books, in type or format, style or decoration, as archetypes of perfection to reproduce or approach which all future books are to endeavour or be condemned, is to negate the whole gospel of art according to Morris. That would be to repeat the mistake of the Renaissance, which worked and lived with its eyes upon the past, instead of learning the Gothic lesson, untiringly taught by Morris, that a vital tradition takes its inspiration and encouragement from the past—"what man has done, man can do"—but without seeking to mould the present upon the outworn pattern of the past, or to restrain the free spirit of man from planning and working towards a nobler world in the future. For there is the main distinction between the Renaissance and the Gothic views of art and of life: the Renaissance thought of the Golden Age as gone by, only to be regained by a literal reproduction of dead things and ideas; while the Gothic builder took only from the past that which was useful to him in the present, and set his Golden Age in front of him, to be grown up to and approached—though, it might be, never attained—through dauntless aspiration and untiring effort.

To deduce an authoritative code of rules from what Morris did or what he said, and to apply those rules without careful

discrimination to the needs, facilities and intentions of to-day, would be to falsify his teaching and belittle his example. For, if there be one truth upon which he most often and most emphatically insisted, it is that no man may save his artistic soul alive by a servile adherence to ready-made rules, but can only do so by carrying through his own inborn creative impulse at all costs, though in accordance with commonsense, and that observance of rhythmic order and restrained harmony which, if he be an artist at all, will be for him instinctive. The discipline of a living tradition, as Morris tried to revive and apply it, has nothing and can have nothing in common with tyranny or the reign of the dead hand. It is, on the contrary, a steadily revivified and revivifying body of counsel and advice, "for edification but not for doctrine," which a beginner may only disregard at his peril, which the master workman will treat with respect, but to be accepted by neither as a register of unchanged and unchangeable decrees.

When the world has tired of its Moloch-worship, of enthroning the machine as its god and ruler, of accepting a mechanicalized commercialism as its philosophy of life, of sacrificing the natural beauty of the earth to its greed, of wasting the accumulated riches due to the creative powers of Man in the past, and frustrating all that these powers might effect in the present, it will turn to William Morris as to its prophet and guide. In him it will find a wise teacher, whose knowledge was rooted in experience and verified by practice, a man who wrought out his ideals in every walk and relation of life, leaving an unparalleled example of high endeavour and noble achievement, and yet was at no point remote from the ordinary man. For the ordinary man, indeed, if he but seek to do good work within the limits of his own craft, understanding that through his work alone can he realize himself at his highest, and that if his work be done in fellowship, not only is his work ennobled but he himself along with it, there is no recorded life which affords the encouragement and inspiration to be found in that of William Morris.

EPILOGUE

ALMOST in the act of putting the last touches to this work, the Author was taken from us suddenly and painlessly, and it falls to the lot of a friend of nearly forty years' standing to see it through the press with the final revision he would have given. It had long been a cherished ambition of his to set down at length his memories of the great artist and craftsman who had been to him, as to so many others, an inspiration; and it was a crowning pleasure to him that he should at last have been able to give them to the public in a form not unworthy of their subject. He would have specially disliked any intrusion of a personal note into a work solely dedicated to the memory of William Morris, so that nothing can here be said of the considerable bulk and importance of his writings or of the personal qualities which endeared him to a wide circle of friends; and it does not become me to dwell on the value and importance of this record, which unites, through the generosity of the trustees of the Kelmscott Press, a full reprint of a work which has become scarce and expensive with a volume of personal reminiscences covering the period of its inception and early growth by one who was on close terms of familiarity with its founder. The records of conversations with William Morris are not, it is true, founded on notes taken at the time, and their authenticity depends on the deep impression made on the hearer, but apart from the question of strict verbal accuracy I am, from my own knowledge, assured that, as in the case of another disciple of Morris in similar circumstances, there is "nothing in these pages that is not true in circumstance and substance, if not in every instance in precise delineation and phrase, of what actually occurred." This book is, as far as human effort can make it, accurate and complete, and the spirit and honesty with which it is written is some measure of the effect produced on every one who came in contact with William Morris. And thus I bid farewell to my friend, with the words on his tombstone quoted from the last paragraph of this book

ROBERT STEELE

HE SOUGHT TO DO GOOD WORK WITHIN
THE LIMITS OF HIS OWN CRAFT

APPENDIX

A NOTE BY WILLIAM MORRIS ON HIS AIMS IN FOUNDING THE KELMSCOTT PRESS.

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESS, BY S. C. COCKERELL.

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BOOKS PRINTED THEREAT, BY S. C. COCKERELL.

A NOTE BY WILLIAM MORRIS ON HIS AIMS IN FOUNDING THE KELMSCOTT PRESS

I BEGAN printing books with the hope of producing some which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time they should be easy to read and should not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters. I have always been a great admirer of the calligraphy of the Middle Ages, and of the earlier printing which took its place. As to the fifteenth century books, I had noticed that they were always beautiful by force of the mere typography, even without the added ornament, with which many of them are so lavishly supplied. And it was the essence of my undertaking to produce books which it would be a pleasure to look upon as pieces of printing and arrangement of type. Looking at my adventure from this point of view then, I found I had to consider chiefly the following things: the paper, the form of the type, the relative spacing of the letters, the words, and the lines, and lastly the position of the printed matter on the page.

It was a matter of course that I should consider it necessary that the paper should be hand-made, both for the sake of durability and appearance. It would be a very false economy to stint in the quality of the paper as to price: so I had only to think about the kind of hand-made paper. On this head I came to two conclusions: 1st, that the paper must be wholly of linen (most hand-made papers are of cotton to-day), and must be quite "hard," *i.e.* thoroughly well sized; and 2nd, that though it must be "laid" and not "wove" (*i.e.* made on a mould made of obvious wires), the lines caused by the wires of the mould must not be too strong, so as to give a ribbed appearance. I found that on these points I was at one with the practice of the papermakers of the fifteenth century; so I took as

my model a Bolognese paper of about 1473. My friend Mr. Batchelor, of Little Chart, Kent, carried out my views very satisfactorily, and produced from the first the excellent paper which I still use.

Next as to type. By instinct rather than by conscious thinking it over, I began by getting myself a fount of Roman type. And here what I wanted was letter pure in form; severe, without needless excrescences; solid, without the thickening and thinning of the line, which is the essential fault of the ordinary modern type, and which makes it difficult to read; and not compressed laterally, as all later type has grown to be owing to commercial exigencies. There was only one source from which to take examples of this perfected Roman type, to wit, the works of the great Venetian printers of the fifteenth century, of whom Nicholas Jenson produced the completest and most Roman characters from 1470 to 1476. This type I studied with much care, getting it photographed to a big scale, and drawing it over many times before I began designing my own letter; so that though I think I mastered the essence of it, I did not copy it servilely; in fact, my Roman type, especially in the lower case, tends rather more to the Gothic than does Jenson's.

After a while I felt that I must have a Gothic as well as a Roman fount; and herein the task I set myself was to redeem the Gothic character from the charge of unreadableness which is commonly brought against it. And I felt that this charge could not be reasonably brought against the types of the first two decades of printing: that Schoeffer at Mainz, Mentelin at Strasburg, and Gunther Zainer at Augsburg, avoided the spiky ends and undue compression which lay some of the later printers open to the above charge. Only the earlier printers (naturally following therein the practice of their predecessors the scribes) were very liberal of contractions, and used an excess of "tied" letters, which, by the way, are very useful to the compositor. So I entirely eschewed contractions, except for the "&," and had very few tied letters, in fact none but the absolutely necessary ones. Keeping my end steadily in view, I designed a black-letter type which I think I may claim to be as readable as a Roman one, and to say the truth I prefer it to the Roman. This type is of the size called Great Primer (the

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Roman type is of "English" size); but later on I was driven by the necessities of the Chaucer (a double-columned book) to get a smaller Gothic type of Pica size.

The punches for all these types, I may mention, were cut for me with great intelligence and skill by Mr. E. P. Prince, and render my designs most satisfactorily.

Now as to the spacing: First, the "face" of the letter should be as nearly conterminous with the "body" as possible, so as to avoid undue whites between the letters. Next, the lateral spaces between the words should be (*a*) no more than is necessary to distinguish clearly the division into words, and (*b*) should be as nearly equal as possible. Modern printers, even the best, pay very little heed to these two essentials of seemly composition, and the inferior ones run riot in licentious spacing, thereby producing, *inter alia*, those ugly rivers of lines running about the page which are such a blemish to decent printing. Third, the whites between the lines should not be excessive; the modern practice of "leading" should be used as little as possible, and never without some definite reason, such as marking some special piece of printing. The only leading I have allowed myself is in some cases a "thin" lead between the lines of my Gothic pica type; in the Chaucer and the double-columned books I have used a "hair" lead, and not even this in the 16mo books. Lastly, but by no means least, comes the position of the printed matter on the page. This should always leave the inner margin the narrowest, the top somewhat wider, the outside (fore-edge) wider still, and the bottom widest of all. This rule is never departed from in medieval books, written or printed. Modern printers systematically transgress against it; thus apparently contradicting the fact that the unit of a book is not one page, but a pair of pages. A friend, the librarian of one of our most important private libraries, tells me that after careful testing he has come to the conclusion that the medieval rule was to make a difference of 20 per cent from margin to margin. Now these matters of spacing and position are of the greatest importance in the production of beautiful books; if they are properly considered they will make a book printed in quite ordinary type at least decent and pleasant to the eye. The disregard of them will spoil the effect of the best designed type.

It was only natural that I, a decorator by profession, should attempt to ornament my books suitably; about this matter I will only say that I have always tried to keep in mind the necessity for making my decoration a part of the page of type. I may add that in designing the magnificent and inimitable woodcuts which have adorned several of my books, and will above all adorn the Chaucer which is now drawing near to completion, my friend Sir Edward Burne-Jones has never lost sight of this important point, so that his work will not only give us a series of most beautiful and imaginative pictures, but form the most harmonious decoration possible to the printed book.

KELMSCOTT HOUSE,
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH,
Nov. 11, 1895.

A SHORT HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION
OF THE KELMSCOTT PRESS

By S. C. Cockerell

The foregoing article was written at the request of a London bookseller for an American client who was about to read a paper on the Kelmscott Press. As the Press is now closing, and its seven years' existence will soon be a matter of history, it seems fitting to set down some other facts concerning it while they can still be verified; the more so as statements founded on imperfect information have appeared from time to time in newspapers and reviews.

As early as 1866 an edition of *The Earthly Paradise* was projected, which was to have been a folio in double columns, profusely illustrated by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and typographically superior to the books of that time. The designs for the stories of Cupid and Psyche, Pygmalion and the Image, The Ring given to Venus, and The Hill of Venus, were finished, and forty-four of those for Cupid and Psyche were engraved on wood in line, somewhat in the manner of the early German masters. About thirty-five of the blocks were executed by William Morris himself, and the remainder by George Y. Wardle, G. F. Campfield, C. J. Faulkner, and Miss Elizabeth Burden. Specimen pages were set up in Caslon type, and in the Chiswick Press type afterwards used in *The House of the Wolfings*, but for various reasons the project went no further. Four or five years later there was a plan for an illustrated edition of *Love is Enough*, for which two initial L's and seven side ornaments were drawn and engraved by William Morris. Another marginal ornament was engraved by him from a design by Sir E. Burne-Jones, who also drew a picture for the frontispiece, which has now been engraved

by W. H. Hooper for the final page of the Kelmscott Press edition of the work. These side ornaments, three of which appear on the opposite page, are more delicate than any that were designed for the Kelmscott Press, but they show that when the Press was started the idea of reviving some of the decorative features of the earliest printed books had been long in its founder's mind. At this same period, in the early 'seventies, he was much absorbed in the study of ancient manuscripts and in writing out and illuminating various books, including a *Horace* and an *Omar Khayyam*, which may have led his thoughts away from printing. In any case, the plan of an illustrated *Love is Enough*, like that of the folio *Earthly Paradise*, was abandoned.

Although the books written by Morris continued to be reasonably well printed, it was not until about 1888 that he again paid much attention to typography. He was then, and for the rest of his life, when not away from Hammersmith, in daily communication with his friend and neighbour Emery Walker, whose views on the subject coincided with his own, and who had besides a practical knowledge of the technique of printing. These views were first expressed in an article by Mr. Walker in the catalogue of the Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, held at the New Gallery in the autumn of 1888. As a result of many conversations, *The House of the Wolfings* was printed at the Chiswick Press at this time, with a special type modelled on an old Basel fount, unleaded, and with due regard to proportion in the margins. The title-page was also carefully arranged. In the following year *The Roots of the Mountains* was printed with the same type (except the lower-case e), but with a differently proportioned page, and with shoulder-notes instead of headlines. This book was published in November 1889, and its author declared it to be the best-looking book issued since the seventeenth century. Instead of large-paper copies, which had been found unsatisfactory in the case of *The House of the Wolfings*, two hundred and fifty copies were printed on Whatman paper of about the same size as the paper of the ordinary copies. A small stock of this paper remained over, and, in order to dispose of it, seventy-five copies of the translation of the Gunnlaug Saga, which first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of January 1869, and after-

wards in *Three Northern Love Stories*, were printed at the Chiswick Press. The type used was a black-letter copied from one of Caxton's founts, and the initials were left blank to be rubricated by hand. Three copies were printed on vellum. This little book was not, however, finished until November 1890.

Meanwhile Morris had resolved to design a special type of his own. Immediately after *The Roots of the Mountains* appeared, he set to work upon it, and in December 1889 he asked Mr. Walker to go into partnership with him as a printer. This offer was declined by Mr. Walker; but, though not concerned with the financial side of the enterprise, he was virtually a partner in the Kelmscott Press from its first beginnings to its end, and no important step was taken without his advice and approval. Indeed, the original intention was to have the books set up in Hammersmith and printed at his office in Clifford's Inn.

It was at this time that Morris began again to collect the medieval books of which he formed so fine a library in the next six years. He had made a small collection of such books years before, but had parted with most of them, to his great regret. He now bought with the definite purpose of studying the type and methods of the early printers. Among the first books so acquired was a copy of Leonard of Arezzo's *History of Florence*, printed at Venice by Jacobus Rubeus in 1476, in a roman type very similar to that of Nicolas Jenson. Parts of this book and of Jenson's *Pliny* of 1476 were enlarged by photography in order to bring out more clearly the characteristics of the various letters; and having mastered both their virtues and their defects, Morris proceeded to design the fount of type which, in the list of December 1892, he named the Golden type, from *The Golden Legend*, which was to have been the first book printed with it. This fount consists of eighty-one designs, including stops, figures, and tied letters. The lower-case alphabet was finished in a few months. The first letter having been cut in Great Primer size by Mr. Prince, was thought too large, and "English" was the size resolved upon. By the middle of August 1890 eleven punches had been cut. At the end of the year the fount was all but complete.

On January 12th, 1891, a cottage, No. 16 Upper Mall, was taken. Mr. William Bowden, a retired master-printer, had

already been engaged to act as compositor and pressman. Enough type was then cast for a trial page, which was set up and printed on Saturday, January 31st, on a sample of the paper that was being made for the Press by J. Batchelor and Son. About a fortnight later ten reams of paper were delivered. On February 18th a good supply of type followed. Mr. W. H. Bowden, who subsequently became overseer, then joined his father as compositor, and the first chapters of *The Glittering Plain* were set up. The first sheet appears to have been printed on March 2nd, when the staff was increased to three by the addition of a pressman named Giles, who left as soon as this first book was finished. A friend who saw Morris on the day after the printing of the page above mentioned recalls his elation at the success of his new type. The first volume of the Saga Library, a creditable piece of printing, was brought out and put beside this trial page, which much more than held its own. Morris then declared his intention to set to work immediately on a black-letter fount; illness, however intervened and it was not begun till June 1891. The lower-case alphabet was finished by the beginning of August, with the exception of the tied letters, the designs for which, with those for the capitals, were sent to Mr. Prince on September 11th. Early in November enough type was cast for two trial pages, the one consisting of twenty-six lines of Chaucer's Franklin's Tale and the other of sixteen lines of *Sigurd the Volsung*. In each of these a capital I is used that was immediately discarded. On the last day of 1891 the full stock of Troy type was despatched from the foundry. Its first appearance was in a paragraph, announcing the book from which it took its name, in the list dated May 1892.

This Troy type, which its designer preferred to either of the others, shows the influence of the beautiful early types of Peter Schoeffer of Mainz, Gunther Zainer of Augsburg, and Anthony Koburger of Nuremberg; but, even more than the Golden type, it has a strong character of its own, which differs largely from that of any medieval fount. It has recently been pirated abroad, and is advertised by an enterprising German firm as "Die amerikanische Triumph-Gothisch." The Golden type has perhaps fared worse in being remodelled in the United States, whence, with much of its character lost, it has found its

way back to England under the names "Venetian," "Italian," and "Jenson." It is strange that no one has yet had the good sense to have the actual type of Nicholas Jenson reproduced.

The third type used at the Kelmscott Press, called the "Chaucer," differs from the Troy type only in size, being Pica instead of Great Primer. It was cut by Mr. Prince between February and May 1892, and was ready in June. Its first appearance is in the list of chapters and glossary of *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, which was issued on November 24th, 1892.

On June 2nd of that same year Morris wrote to Mr. Prince: "I believe in about three months' time I shall be ready with a new set of sketches for a fount of type on English body." These sketches were not forthcoming; but on November 5th, 1892, he bought a copy of *Augustinus De Civitate Dei*, printed at the monastery of Subiaco near Rome by Sweynheym and Pannartz, with a rather compressed type, which appears in only three known books. He at once designed a lower-case alphabet on this model, but was not satisfied with it and did not have it cut. This was his last actual experiment in the designing of type, though he sometimes talked of designing a new fount, and of having the Golden type cut in a larger size.

Next in importance to the type are the initials, borders and ornaments designed by William Morris. The first book contains a single recto border and twenty different initials. In the next book, *Poems by the Way*, the number of different initials is fifty-nine. These early initials, many of which were soon discarded, are for the most part suggestive, like the first border, of the ornament in Italian manuscripts of the fifteenth century. In Blunt's *Love Lyrics* there are seven letters of a new alphabet, with backgrounds of naturalesque grapes and vine leaves, the result of a visit to Beauvais, where the great porches are carved with vines, in August 1891. From that time onwards fresh designs were constantly added, the tendency being always towards larger foliage and lighter backgrounds, as the early initials were found to be sometimes too dark for the type. The total number of initials of various sizes designed for the Kelmscott Press, including a few that were engraved but never used, is three hundred and eighty-four. Of the letter T alone there are no less than thirty-four varieties.

The total number of different borders engraved for the Press, including one that was not used, but excluding the three borders designed for *The Earthly Paradise* by R. Catterson-Smith, is fifty-seven. The first book to contain a marginal ornament, other than these full borders, was *The Defence of Guenevere*, which has a half-border on p. 74. There are two others in the preface to *The Golden Legend*. *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* is the first book in which there is a profusion of such ornament. One hundred and eight different designs for marginal ornaments were engraved. Besides the above-named designs, there are seven frames for the pictures in *The Glittering Plain*, one frame for those in a projected edition of *The House of the Wolfings*, nineteen frames for the pictures in the *Chaucer* (one of which was not used in the book), twenty-eight title-pages and inscriptions, twenty-six large initial words for the *Chaucer*, seven initial words for *The Well at the World's End* and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, four line-endings, and three printer's marks, making a total of six hundred and forty-four designs by Morris, drawn and engraved within the space of seven years. All the initials and ornaments that recur were printed from electrotypes, while most of the titlepages and initial words were printed direct from the wood. The illustrations by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Walter Crane and C. M. Gere were also, with one or two exceptions, printed from the wood. The original designs by Burne-Jones were nearly all in pencil and were re-drawn in ink by R. Catterson-Smith, and in a few cases by C. Fairfax Murray; they were then revised by the artist and transferred to the wood by means of photography. The twelve designs by A. J. Gaskin for Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, the map in *The Sundering Flood*, and the thirty-five reproductions in *Some German Woodcuts of the Fifteenth Century*, were printed from process blocks.

All the woodblocks for initials, ornaments, and illustrations were engraved by W. H. Hooper, C. E. Keates and W. Spielmeyer, except the twenty-three blocks for *The Glittering Plain*, which were engraved by A. Leverett, and a few of the earliest initials, engraved by G. F. Campfield. The whole of these woodblocks have been sent to the British Museum, and have been accepted with a condition that they shall not be reproduced or printed from for the space of a hundred years.

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The electrotypes have been destroyed. In taking this course, which was sanctioned by Morris when the matter was talked of a short while before his death, the aim of the trustees has been to keep the series of Kelmscott Press books as a thing apart, and to prevent the designs becoming stale by constant repetition. Many of them have been stolen and parodied in America, but in this country they are fortunately copyright. The type remains in the hands of the trustees, and will be used for the printing of its designer's works, should special editions be called for. Other books of which he would have approved may also be printed with it; the absence of initials and ornament will always distinguish them sufficiently from the books printed at the Kelmscott Press.

The nature of the English handmade paper used at the Press has been described by William Morris in the foregoing article. It was at first supplied in sheets of which the dimensions were sixteen inches by eleven. Each sheet had as a watermark a conventional primrose between the initials W. M. As stated above, *The Golden Legend* was to have been the first book put in hand, but as only two pages could have been printed at a time, and this would have made it very costly, paper of double the size was ordered for this work, and *The Story of the Glittering Plain* was begun instead. This book is a small quarto, as are its five immediate successors, each sheet being folded twice. The last ream of the smaller size of paper was used on *The Order of Chivalry*. All the other volumes of that series are printed in octavo, on paper of the double size. For the *Chaucer* a stouter and slightly larger paper was needed. This has for its watermark a perch with a spray in its mouth. Many of the large quarto books were printed on this paper, of which the first two reams were delivered in February 1893. Only one other size of paper was used at the Kelmscott Press. The watermark of this is an apple, with the initials W. M., as in the other two watermarks. The books printed on this paper are *The Earthly Paradise, The Floure and the Leafe, The Shepheardes Calender*, and *Sigurd the Volsung*. The last named is a folio, and the open book shows the size of the sheet, which is about eighteen inches by thirteen. The first supply of this Apple paper was delivered on March 15, 1895.

Except in the case of Blunt's *Love Lyrics, The Nature of*

Gothic, *Biblia Innocentium*, *The Golden Legend*, and *The Book of Wisdom and Lies*, a few copies of all the books were printed on vellum. The six copies of *The Glittering Plain* were printed on very fine vellum, obtained from Rome, of which it was impossible to get a second supply as it was all required by the Vatican. The vellum for the other books, except for two or three copies of *Poems by the Way*, which were on the Roman vellum, was supplied by H. Band of Brentford, and by W. J. Turney and Co. of Stourbridge. There are three complete vellum sets in existence, and the extreme difficulty of completing a set after the copies are scattered makes it unlikely that there will ever be a fourth.

The black ink which proved most satisfactory, after that of more than one English firm was tried, was obtained from Hanover. Morris often spoke of making his own ink, in order to be certain of the ingredients, but his intention was never carried out.

The binding of the books in vellum and in half holland was from the first done by J. and J. Leighton. Most of the vellum used was white, or nearly so, but Morris himself much preferred it dark, and the skins showing brown hair-marks were reserved for the binding of his own copies of the books. The silk ties of four colours, red, blue, yellow, and green, were specially woven and dyed.

In the following section fifty-two works, in sixty-six volumes, are described as having been printed at the Kelmscott Press, besides the two pages of Froissart's *Chronicles*. It is scarcely necessary to add that only hand presses have been used, of the type known as "Albion." In the early days there was only one press on which the books were printed, besides a small press for taking proofs. At the end of May 1891 larger premises were taken at 14 Upper Mall, next door to the cottage already referred to, which was given up in June. In November 1891 a second press was bought, as *The Golden Legend* was not yet half finished, and it seemed as though the last of its 1286 pages would never be reached. Three years later another small house was taken, No. 21 Upper Mall, overlooking the river, which acted as a reflector, so there was an excellent light for printing. In January 1895 a third press, specially made for the work, was set up here in order that two presses might be employed

on the *Chaucer*. This press has already passed into other hands, and the little house, with its many associations, and its pleasant outlook towards Chiswick and Mortlake, is now being transformed into a granary. The last sheet printed there was that on which are the frontispiece and title of this book.

14 Upper Mall, Hammersmith,
        January 4, 1898.

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF ALL THE BOOKS PRINTED AT THE KELMSCOTT PRESS IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY WERE ISSUED.

Note.—The borders are numbered as far as possible in the order of their first appearance, those which appear on a verso or left-hand page being distinguished by the addition of the letter "a" to the numbers of the recto borders of similar design.

1. THE STORY OF THE GLITTERING PLAIN. WHICH HAS BEEN ALSO CALLED THE LAND OF LIVING MEN OR THE ACRE OF THE UNDYING. WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small 4to. Golden type. Border 1. 200 paper copies at two guineas and 6 on vellum. Dated April 4, issued May 8, 1891. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in stiff vellum with washleather ties.

This book was set up from Nos. 81-4 of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, in which it first appeared; some of the chapter headings were re-arranged, and a few small corrections were made in the text. A trial page, the first printed at the Press, was struck off on January 31, 1891, but the first sheet was not printed until about a month later. The border was designed in January of the same year, and engraved by W. H. Hooper. Morris had four of the vellum copies bound in green vellum, three of which he gave to friends. Only two copies on vellum were sold, at twelve and fifteen guineas. This was the only book with washleather ties. All the other vellum-bound books have silk ties, except Shelley's *Poems* and *Hand and Soul*, which have no ties.

2. POEMS BY THE WAY. WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Border 1. 300 paper

copies at two guineas, 13 on vellum at about twelve guineas. Dated Sept. 24, issued Oct. 20, 1891. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in stiff vellum.

This was the first book printed at the Kelmscott Press in two colours, and the first book in which the smaller printer's mark appeared. After *The Glittering Plain* was finished, at the beginning of April, no printing was done until May 11. In the meanwhile the compositors were busy setting up the early sheets of *The Golden Legend*. The printing of *Poems by the Way*, which its author first thought of calling *Flores Atramenti*, was not begun until July. The poems in it were written at various times. In the manuscript, *Hafbur and Signy* is dated February 4, 1870; *Hildebrand and Hillilel*, March 1, 1871; and *Love's Reward*, Kelmscott, April 21, 1871. *Meeting in Winter* is a song from *The Story of Orpheus*, an unpublished poem intended for *The Earthly Paradise*. The last poem in the book, *Goldilocks and Goldilocks*, was written on May 20, 1891, for the purpose of adding to the bulk of the volume, which was then being prepared. A few of the vellum covers were stained at Merton red, yellow, indigo, and dark green, but the experiment was not successful.

3. The Love-Lyrics & Songs of Proteus by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt with the Love-Sonnets of Proteus by the same Author now reprinted in their Full Text with many Sonnets omitted from the Earlier Editions. London mdcccxcii. Small 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Border 1. 300 paper copies at two guineas, none on vellum. Dated Jan. 26, issued Feb. 27, 1892. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in stiff vellum.

This is the only book in which the initials are printed in red. This was done by the author's wish.

4. The Nature of Gothic a Chapter of the Stones of Venice. By John Ruskin. With a preface by William Morris. Small 4to. Golden type. Border 1. Diagrams in text. 500 paper copies at thirty shillings, none on vellum. Dated in preface February 15, issued March 22, 1892. Published by George Allen. Bound in stiff vellum.

This chapter of *The Stones of Venice*, which Ruskin always considered the most important in the book, was first printed

separately in 1854 as a sixpenny pamphlet. Morris paid more than one tribute to it in *Hopes and Fears for Art*. Of him Ruskin said in 1887 to the writer of these notes, "Morris is beaten gold."

5. THE DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE, AND OTHER POEMS. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 2, and 1. 300 paper copies at two guineas, 10 on vellum at about twelve guineas. Dated April 2, issued May 19, 1892. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

This book was set up from a copy of the edition published by Reeves and Turner in 1889, the only alteration, except a few corrections, being in the 11th line of *Summer Dawn*. It is divided into three parts, the poems suggested by Malory's *Morte Darthur*, the poems inspired by Froissart's *Chronicles*, and poems on various subjects. The first two sections have borders, and the last has a half-border. The first sheet was printed on February 17, 1892. It was the first book bound in limp vellum, and the only one of which the title was inscribed by hand on the back.

6. A DREAM OF JOHN BALL AND A KING'S LESSON, BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 3a, 4, and 2. With a woodcut designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 300 paper copies at thirty shillings, 11 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated May 13, issued Sept. 24, 1892. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

This was set up with a few alterations from a copy of Reeves and Turner's third edition, and the printing was begun on April 4, 1892. The frontispiece was redrawn from that to the first edition, and engraved on wood by W. H. Hooper, who engraved all Burne-Jones's designs for the Kelmscott Press, except those for the *Life and Death of Jason*. The inscription below the figures, and the narrow border, were designed by Morris, and engraved with the picture on one block, which was afterwards used on a leaflet printed for the Ancoats Brotherhood in February 1894.

7. THE GOLDEN LEGEND. By Jacobus de Voragine. Translated by William Caxton. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 3 vols. Large 4to. Golden type. Borders 5a, 5, 6a, and 7. Woodcut title and

two woodcuts designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 500 paper copies at five guineas, none on vellum. Dated Sept. 12, issued Nov. 3, 1892. Published by Bernard Quaritch. Bound in half holland, with paper labels printed in the Troy type.

In July 1890, when only a few letters of the Golden type had been cut, Morris bought a copy of this book, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1527. He soon afterwards determined to print it, and on Sept. 11 entered into a formal agreement with Quaritch for its publication. It was only an unforeseen difficulty about the size of the first stock of paper that led to *The Golden Legend* not being the first book put in hand. It was set up from a transcript of Caxton's first edition, lent by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library for the purpose. A trial page was got out in March 1891, and 50 pages were in type by May 11, the day on which the first sheet was printed. The first volume was finished, with the exception of the illustrations and the preliminary matter, in Oct. 1891. The two illustrations and the title (which was the first woodcut title designed by Morris) were not engraved until June and August 1892, when the third volume was approaching completion. About half a dozen impressions of the illustrations were pulled on vellum. A slip asking owners of the book not to have it bound with pressure, nor to have the edges cut instead of merely trimmed, was inserted in each copy.

8. THE RECUYELL OF THE HISTORYES OF TROYE. By Raoul Lefevre. Translated by William Caxton. Edited by H. Halliday Sparling. 2 vols. Large 4to. Troy type, with table of chapters and glossary in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 5a, 5, and 8. Woodcut title. 300 paper copies at nine guineas, 5 on vellum at eighty pounds. Published by Bernard Quaritch. Bound in limp vellum.

This book, begun in February 1892, is the first book printed in Troy type, and the first in which Chaucer type appears. It is a reprint of the first book printed in English. It had long been a favourite with Morris, who designed a great quantity of new initials and ornaments for it, and wrote the following note for Quaritch's catalogue: "As to the matter of the book, it makes a thoroughly amusing story, instinct with medieval thought and manners. For though written at the end

of the Middle Ages and dealing with classical mythology, it has in it no token of the coming Renaissance, but is purely medieval. It is the last issue of that story of Troy which through the whole of the Middle Ages had such a hold on men's imaginations; the story built up from a rumour of the Cyclic Poets, of the heroic City of Troy, defended by Priam and his gallant sons, led by Hector the Preux Chevalier, and beset by the violent and brutal Greeks, who were looked on as the necessary machinery for bringing about the undeniable tragedy of the fall of the city. Surely this is well worth reading, if only as a piece of undiluted medievalism." 2000 copies of a 4to announcement, with specimen pages, were printed at the Kelmscott Press in December 1892, for distribution by the publisher.

9. BIBLIA INNOCENTIUM: BEING THE STORY OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE BEFORE THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST UPON EARTH, WRITTEN ANEW FOR CHILDREN BY J. W. MACKAIL, SOMETIME FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD. 8vo. Border 2. 200 on paper at a guinea, none on vellum. Dated Oct. 22, issued Dec. 9, 1892. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in stiff vellum.

This was the last book issued in stiff vellum except *Hand and Soul*, and the last with untrimmed edges. It was the first book printed in 8vo.

10. THE HISTORY OF REYNARD THE FOXE BY WILLIAM CAXTON. Reprinted from his edition of 1481. Edited by H. Halliday Sparling. Large 4to. Troy type, with glossary in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 5a and 7. Woodcut title. 300 on paper at three guineas, 10 on vellum at fifteen guineas. Dated Dec. 15, 1892, issued Jan. 25, 1893. Published by Bernard Quaritch. Bound in limp vellum.

About this book, which was first announced as in the press in the list dated July 1892, Morris wrote the following note for Quaritch's catalogue: "This translation of Caxton's is one of the very best of his works as to style; and being translated from a kindred tongue is delightful as mere language. In its rude joviality, and simple and direct delineation of character, it is a thoroughly good representative of the famous Beast Epic." The edges of this book, and of all subsequent books, were trimmed in accordance with the invariable practice

of the early printers. Mr. Morris much preferred the trimmed edges.

11. THE POEMS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, PRINTED AFTER THE ORIGINAL COPIES OF VENUS AND ADONIS, 1593. THE RAPE OF LUCRECE, 1594. SONNETS, 1609. THE LOVER'S COMPLAINT. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 1 and 2. 500 paper copies at twenty-five shillings, 10 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Jan. 17, issued Feb. 13, 1893. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

A trial page of this book was set up on Nov. 1, 1892. Though the number was large, this has become one of the rarest books issued from the Press.

12. NEWS FROM NOWHERE: OR, AN EPOCH OF REST, BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE, BY WILLIAM MORRIS. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 9a and 4, and a woodcut engraved by W. H. Hooper from a design by C. M. Gere. 300 on paper at two guineas, 10 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Nov. 22, 1892, issued March 24, 1893. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

The text of this book was printed before *Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets*, but it was kept back for the frontispiece, which is a picture of the old manor-house in the village of Kelmscott by the upper Thames, from which the Press took its name. It was set up from a copy of one of Reeves and Turner's editions, and in reading it for the press the author made a few slight corrections. It was the last book except the *Savonarola* (No. 31) in which he used the old paragraph mark ⁌, which was discarded in favour of the leaves which had already been used in the two large 4to books printed in the Troy type.

13. THE ORDER OF CHIVALRY. Translated from the French by William Caxton and reprinted from his edition of 1484. Edited by F. S. Ellis. And L'ORDENE DE CHEVALERIE, WITH TRANSLATION BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small 4to. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 9a and 4, and a woodcut designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. 225 on paper at thirty shillings, 10 on vellum at ten guineas. *The Order of Chivalry* dated

Nov. 10, 1892, *L'Ordene de Chevalerie* dated February 24, 1893, issued April 12, 1893. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

This was the last book printed in small 4to. The last section is in 8vo. It was the first book printed in Chaucer type. The reprint from Caxton was finished while *News from Nowhere* was in the press, and before *Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets* was begun. The French poem and its translation were added as an after-thought, and have a separate colophon. Some of the three-line initials, which were designed for *The Well at the World's End*, are used in the French poem, and this is their first appearance. The translation was begun on Dec. 3, 1892, and the border round the frontispiece was designed on Feb. 13, 1893.

14. THE LIFE OF THOMAS WOLSEY, CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF YORK. WRITTEN BY GEORGE CAVENDISH. Edited by F. S. Ellis from the author's autograph MS. 8vo. Golden type. Border 1. 250 on paper at two guineas, 6 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated March 30, issued May 3, 1893. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

15. THE HISTORY OF GODEFREY OF BOLOYNE AND OF THE CONQUEST OF IHERUSALEM. Reprinted from Caxton's edition of 1481. Edited by H. Halliday Sparling. Large 4to. Troy type, with list of chapter headings and glossary in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 5a and 6, and woodcut title. 300 on paper at six guineas, 6 on vellum at twenty guineas. Dated April 27, issued May 24, 1893. Published by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

This was the fifth and last of the Caxton reprints, with many new ornaments and initials, and a new printer's mark. It was first announced as in the press in the list dated Dec. 1892. It was the first book published and sold at the Kelmscott Press. An announcement and order form, with two different specimen pages, was printed at the Press, besides a special invoice. A few copies were bound in half holland, not for sale.

16. UTOPIA, WRITTEN BY SIR THOMAS MORE. A reprint of the second edition of Ralph Robinson's translation, with a foreword by William Morris. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo.

Chaucer type, with the reprinted title in Troy type. In black and red. Borders 4 and 2. 300 on paper at thirty shillings, 8 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated August 4, issued September 8, 1893. Sold by Reeves and Turner. Bound in limp vellum.

This book was first announced as in the press in the list dated May 20, 1893.

17. Maud, a Monodrama, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 10a and 10, and woodcut title. 500 on paper at two guineas, 5 on vellum not for sale. Dated Aug. 11, issued Sept. 30, 1893. Published by Macmillan and Co. Bound in limp vellum.

The borders were specially designed for this book. They were both used again in the *Keats*, and one of them appears in *The Sundering Flood*. It is the first of the 8vo books with a woodcut title.

18. Gothic Architecture: a Lecture for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. By William Morris. 16mo. Golden type. In black and red. 1500 on paper at two shillings and sixpence, 45 on vellum at ten and fifteen shillings. Bound in half holland.

This lecture was set up at Hammersmith and printed at the New Gallery during the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in October and November 1893. The first copies were ready on October 21, and the book was twice reprinted before the Exhibition closed. It was the first book printed in 16mo. The four-line initials used in it appear here for the first time. The vellum copies were sold during the Exhibition at ten shillings, and the price was subsequently raised to fifteen shillings.

19. Sidonia the Sorceress. By William Meinhold. Translated by Francesca Speranza Lady Wilde. Large 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Border 8. 300 paper copies at four guineas, 10 on vellum at twenty guineas. Dated Sept. 15, issued November 1, 1893. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

Before the publication of this book a large 4to announcement and order form was issued, with a specimen page, and an interesting description of the book and its author, written and

signed by Morris. Some copies were bound in half holland, not for sale.

20. BALLADS AND NARRATIVE POEMS BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 4a and 4. 310 on paper at two guineas, 6 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Oct. 14, issued in November 1893. Published by Ellis and Elvey. Bound in limp vellum.

This book was announced as in preparation in the list of August 1, 1893.

21. THE TALE OF KING FLORUS AND THE FAIR JEHANE. Translated by William Morris from the French of the 13th century. 16mo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 11a and 11, and woodcut title. 350 on paper at seven shillings and sixpence, 15 on vellum at thirty shillings. Dated Dec. 16, issued Dec. 28, 1893. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland.

This story, like the three other translations with which it is uniform, was taken from a little volume called *Nouvelles Françoises en prose du XIIIe siècle*, Paris, Jannet, 1856. They were first announced as in preparation under the heading " French Tales " in the list dated May 20, 1893. Eighty-five copies of *King Florus* were bought by J. and M. L. Tregaskis, who had them bound in all parts of the world. These are now in the Rylands Library at Manchester.

22. THE STORY OF THE GLITTERING PLAIN WHICH HAS BEEN ALSO CALLED THE LAND OF LIVING MEN OR THE ACRE OF THE UNDYING. WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Large 4to. Troy type, with list of chapters in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 12a and 12, 23 designs by Walter Crane, engraved by A. Leverett, and a woodcut title. 250 on paper at five guineas, 7 on vellum at twenty pounds. Dated Jan. 13, issued Feb. 17, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

Neither the borders in this book nor six out of the seven frames round the illustrations appear in any other book. The seventh is used round the second picture in *Love is Enough*. A few copies were bound in half holland.

23. Of the Friendship of Amis and Amile. Done out of the ancient French by William Morris. 16mo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 11a and 11, and woodcut title. 500 on paper at seven shillings and sixpence, 15 on vellum at thirty shillings. Dated March 13, issued April 4, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland.

A poem entitled "Amys and Amillion," founded on this story, was originally to have appeared in the second volume of *The Earthly Paradise*, but, like some other poems announced at the same time, it was not included in the book.

20a. Sonnets and Lyrical Poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 1a and 1, and woodcut title. 310 on paper at two guineas, 6 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Feb. 20, issued April 21, 1894. Published by Ellis and Elvey. Bound in limp vellum.

This book is uniform with No. 20, to which it forms a sequel. Both volumes were read for the press by W. M. Rossetti.

24. The Poems of John Keats. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 10a and 10, and woodcut title. 300 on paper at thirty shillings, 7 on vellum at nine guineas. Dated March 7, issued May 8, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This is now (Jan. 1898) the most sought after of all the smaller Kelmscott Press books. It was announced as in preparation in the lists of May 27 and August 1, 1893, and as in the press in that of March 31, 1894, when the woodcut title still remained to be printed.

25. Atalanta in Calydon: A Tragedy. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. Large 4to. Troy type, with argument and dramatis personae in Chaucer type; the dedication and quotation from Euripides in Greek type designed by Selwyn Image. In black and red. Borders 5a and 5, and woodcut title. 250 on paper at two guineas, 8 on vellum at twelve guineas. Dated May 4, issued July 24, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

In the vellum copies of this book the colophon is not on the 82nd page as in the paper copies, but on the following page.

26. The Tale of the Emperor Coustans and of Over Sea. Done out of the ancient French by William Morris. 16mo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 11a and 11, both twice, and two woodcut titles. 525 on paper at seven shillings and sixpence, 20 on vellum at two guineas. Dated August 30, issued Sept. 26, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland.

The first of these stories, which was the source of "*The Man born to be King*," in *The Earthly Paradise*, was announced as in preparation in the list of March 31, 1894.

27. The Wood beyond the World. By William Morris. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 13a and 13, and a frontispiece designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones, and engraved on wood by W. Spielmeyer. 350 on paper at two guineas. Dated May 30, issued Oct. 16, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

The borders in this book, as well as the ten half-borders, are here used for the first time. It was first announced as in the press in the list of March 31, 1894. Another edition was published by Lawrence and Bullen in 1895.

28. The Book of Wisdom and Lies. A book of traditional stories from Georgia in Asia. Translated by Oliver Wardrop from the original of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 4a and 4, and woodcut title. 250 on paper at two guineas, none on vellum. Finished Sept. 29, issued Oct. 29, 1894. Published by Bernard Quaritch. Bound in limp vellum.

The arms of Georgia, consisting of the Holy Coat, appear in the woodcut title of this book.

29. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Volume I. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. Borders 1a and 1, and woodcut title. 250 on paper at twenty-five shillings, 6 on vellum at eight guineas. Not dated, issued Nov. 29, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum without ties.

Red ink is not used in this volume, though it is used in the second volume, and more sparingly in the third. Some of the half-borders designed for *The Wood beyond the World* reappear

before the longer poems. The *Shelley* was first announced as in the press in the list of March 31, 1894.

30. PSALMI PENITENTIALES. An English rhymed version of the Seven Penitential Psalms. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. 300 on paper at seven shillings and sixpence, 12 on vellum at three guineas. Dated Nov. 15, issued Dec. 10, 1894. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland.

These verses were taken from a manuscript Book of Hours written at Gloucester in the first half of the 15th century, but the Rev. Professor Skeat has pointed out that the scribe must have copied them from an older manuscript, as they are in the Kentish dialect of about a century earlier. The half-border on p. 34 appears for the first time in this book.

31. EPISTOLA DE CONTEMPTU MUNDI DI FRATE HIERONYMO DA FERRARA DELLORDINE DE FRATI PREDICATORI LA QUALE MANDA AD ELENA BUONACCORSI SUA MADRE, PER CONSO-LARLA DELLA MORTE DEL FRATELLO, SUO ZIO. Edited by Charles Fairfax Murray from the original autograph letter. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Border 1. Woodcut on title designed by C. F. Murray and engraved by W. H. Hooper. 150 on paper, and 6 on vellum. Dated Nov. 30, ready Dec. 12, 1894. Bound in half holland.

This little book was printed for Mr. C. Fairfax Murray, the owner of the manuscript, and was not for sale in the ordinary way. The colophon is in Italian, and the printer's mark is in red.

32. THE TALE OF BEOWULF. Done out of the old English tongue by William Morris and A. J. Wyatt. Large 4to. Troy type, with argument, side-notes, list of persons and places, and glossary in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 14a and 14, and woodcut title. 300 on paper at two guineas, 8 on vellum at ten pounds. Dated Jan. 10, issued Feb. 2, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

The borders in this book were only used once again, in the *Jason*. A *Note to the Reader* printed on a slip in the Golden type was inserted in each copy. *Beowulf* was first announced

as in preparation in the list of May 20, 1893. The verse translation was begun by Morris, with the aid of Mr. Wyatt's careful paraphrase of the text, on Feb. 21, 1893, and finished on April 10, 1894, but the argument was not written by Morris until Dec. 10, 1894.

33. Syr Perecyvelle of Gales. Overseen by F. S. Ellis, after the edition edited by J. O. Halliwell from the Thornton MS. in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 13a and 13, and a woodcut designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 350 on paper at fifteen shillings, 8 on vellum at four guineas. Dated Feb. 16, issued May 2, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This is the first of the series to which *Sire Degrevaunt* and *Syr Isumbrace* belong. They were all reprinted from the Camden Society's volume of 1844, which was a favourite with Morris from his Oxford days. Syr Perecyvelle was first announced in the list of Dec. 1, 1894. The shoulder-notes were added by Morris.

34. The Life and Death of Jason, a Poem. By William Morris. Large 4to. Troy type, with a few words in Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 14a and 14, and two woodcuts designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones and engraved on wood by W. Spielmeyer. 200 on paper at five guineas, 6 on vellum at twenty guineas. Dated May 25, issued July 5, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This book, announced as in the press in the list of April 21, 1894, proceeded slowly, as several other books, notably the *Chaucer*, were being printed at the same time. The text, which had been corrected for the second edition of 1868, and for the edition of 1882, was again revised by the author. The line-fillings on the last page were cut on metal for this book, and cast like type.

29a. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Volume II. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. 250 on paper at twenty-five shillings, 6 on vellum at eight guineas. Not dated, issued March 25, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum without ties.

35. Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair. By William Morris. 2 vols. 16mo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 15a and 15, and woodcut title. 600 on paper at fifteen shillings, 12 on vellum at four guineas. Dated July 25, issued Sept. 25, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland with labels printed in the Golden type.

The borders designed for this book were only used once again, in *Hand and Soul*. The plot of the story was suggested by that of Havelok the Dane, printed by the Early English Text Society.

29b. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Volume III. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. 250 on paper at twenty-five shillings, 6 on vellum at eight guineas. Dated August 21, issued October 28, 1895. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum without ties.

36. Hand and Soul. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Reprinted from the *Germ* for Messrs. Way and Williams, of Chicago. 16mo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 15a and 15, and woodcut title. 300 paper copies and 11 vellum copies for America. 225 paper copies for sale in England at ten shillings, and 10 on vellum at thirty shillings. Dated Oct. 24, issued Dec. 12, 1895. Bound in stiff vellum without ties.

This was the only 16mo book in vellum. The English and American copies have a slightly different colophon. The shoulder-notes were added by Morris.

37. Poems chosen out of the Works of Robert Herrick. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 4a and 4, and woodcut title. 250 on paper at thirty shillings, 8 on vellum at eight guineas. Dated Nov. 21, 1895, issued Feb. 6, 1896. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This book was first announced as in preparation in the list of Dec. 1, 1894, and as in the press in that of July 1, 1895.

38. Poems chosen out of the Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Edited by F. S. Ellis. 8vo. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 13a and 13. 300 on paper at a guinea,

8 on vellum at five guineas. Dated Feb. 5, issued April 12, 1896. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This book contains thirteen poems. It was first announced as in preparation in the list of Dec. 1, 1894, and as in the press in that of Nov. 26, 1895. It is the last of the series to which Tennyson's *Maud*, and the poems of Rossetti, Keats, Shelley, and Herrick belong.

39. THE WELL AT THE WORLD'S END. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Large 4to. Double columns. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 16a, 16, 17a, 17, 18a, 18, 19a and 19, and 4 woodcuts designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 350 on paper at five guineas, 8 on vellum at twenty guineas. Dated March 2, issued June 4, 1896. Sold by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This book, delayed for various reasons, was longer on hand than any other. It appears in no less than twelve lists, from that of Dec. 1892, to that of Nov. 26, 1895, as "in the press." Trial pages, including one in a single column, were ready as early as September 1892, and the printing began on Dec. 16 of that year. The edition of *The Well at the World's End* published by Longmans was then being printed from the author's manuscript at the Chiswick Press, and the Kelmscott Press edition was set up from the sheets of that edition, which, though not issued until October 1896, was finished in 1894. The eight borders and the six different ornaments between the columns appear here for the first time, but are used again in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, with the exception of two borders.

40. THE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER. Edited by F. S. Ellis. Folio. Chaucer type, with headings to the longer poems in Troy type. In black and red. Borders 20a to 26, woodcut title, and eighty-seven illustrations designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 425 on paper at twenty pounds, 13 on vellum at 120 guineas. Dated May 8, issued June 26, 1896. Published by William Morris. Bound in half holland.

The history of this book, which is by far the most important achievement of the Kelmscott Press, is as follows. As far back as June 11, 1891, Morris spoke of printing a *Chaucer* with a black-letter fount which he hoped to design. Four months

later, when most of the Troy type was designed and cut, he expressed his intention to use it first on *John Ball*, and then on a *Chaucer* and perhaps a *Gesta Romanorum*. By January 1, 1892, the Troy type was delivered, and early in that month two trial pages, one from *The Cook's Tale* and one from *Sir Thopas*, the latter in double columns, were got out. It then became evident that the type was too large for a *Chaucer*, and Morris decided to have it re-cut in the size known as pica. By the end of June he was thus in possession of the type which in the list issued in December 1892, he named the Chaucer type. In July 1892, another trial page, a passage from *The Knight's Tale* in double columns of 58 lines, was got out, and found to be satisfactory. The idea of the *Chaucer* as it now exists, with illustrations by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, then took definite shape.

In a proof of the first list, dated April 1892, there is an announcement of the book as in preparation, in black-letter, large quarto, but this was struck out, and does not appear in the list as printed in May, nor yet in the July list. In that for Dec. 1892, it is announced for the first time as to be in Chaucer type "with about sixty designs by E. Burne-Jones." The next list, dated March 9, 1893, states that it will be a folio, and that it is in the press, by which was meant that a few pages were in type. In the list dated Aug. 1, 1893, the probable price is given as twenty pounds. The next four lists contain no fresh information, but on Aug. 17, 1894, nine days after the first sheet was printed, a notice was sent to the trade that there would be 325 copies at twenty pounds and about sixty woodcuts designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Three months later it was decided to increase the number of illustrations to upwards of seventy, and to print another 100 copies of the book. A circular letter was sent to subscribers on Nov. 14, stating this and giving them an opportunity of cancelling their orders. Orders were not withdrawn, the extra copies were immediately taken up, and the list for Dec. 1, 1894, which is the first containing full particulars, announces that all paper copies are sold.

Morris began designing his first folio border on Feb. 1, 1893, but was dissatisfied with the design and did not finish it. Three days later he began the vine border for the

first page, and finished it in about a week, together with the initial word "Whan," the two lines of heading, and the frame for the first picture, and W. H. Hooper engraved the whole of these on one block. The first picture was engraved at about the same time. A specimen of the first page (differing slightly from the same page as it appears in the book) was shown at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in October and November 1893, and was issued to a few leading booksellers, but it was not until August 8, 1894, that the first sheet was printed at 14 Upper Mall. On Jan. 8, 1895, another press was started at 21 Upper Mall, and from that time two presses were almost exclusively at work on the *Chaucer*. By Sept. 10 the last page of *The Romaunt of the Rose* was printed. In the middle of Feb. 1896 Morris began designing the title. It was finished on the 27th of the same month, and engraved by Hooper in March. On May 8, a year and nine months after the printing of the first sheet, the book was completed. On June 2 the first two copies were delivered to its producers, Burne-Jones and Morris. Morris's copy is now at Exeter College, Oxford, with other books printed at the Kelmscott Press.

Besides the eighty-seven woodcut illustrations designed by Burne-Jones, and engraved by Hooper, the *Chaucer* contains a woodcut title, fourteen large borders, eighteen different frames round the illustrations, and twenty-six large initial words designed for the book by William Morris. Many of these were engraved by C. E. Keates, and others by W. H. Hooper and W. Spielmeyer.

In Feb. 1896 a notice was issued respecting special bindings, of which Morris intended to design four. Two of these were to be executed under T. J. Cobden-Sanderson's direction at the Doves Bindery, and two by J. and J. Leighton. But the only design that he was able to complete was for a full white pigskin binding, which has now been carried out at the Doves Bindery on forty-eight copies, including two on vellum.

41. The Earthly Paradise. By William Morris. Volume I. Prologue: The Wanderers. March: Atalanta's Race. The Man born to be King. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 27a, 27, 28a, and 28, and

woodcut title. 225 on paper at thirty shillings, 6 on vellum
at seven guineas. Dated May 7, issued July 24, 1896. Pub-
lished by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

This was the first book printed on the paper with the apple
water-mark. The seven other volumes followed it at intervals
of a few months. None of the ten borders used in *The Earthly
Paradise* appear in any other book. The four different half-
borders round the poems to the months are also not used else-
where. The first border was designed in June 1895.

42. LAUDES BEATAE MARIAE VIRGINIS. Latin poems taken
from a Psalter written in England about A.D. 1220. Edited
by S. C. Cockerell. Large 4to. Troy type. In black, red and
blue. 250 on paper at ten shillings, 10 on vellum at two
guineas. Dated July 7, issued August 7, 1896. Published by
William Morris. Bound in half holland.

This was the first book printed at the Kelmscott Press in
three colours. The manuscript from which the poems were
taken was one of the most beautiful of the English books in
Morris's possession, both as regards writing and ornament.
No author's name is given to the poems, but after this book
was issued the Rev. E. S. Dewick pointed out that they had
already been printed at Tegernsee in 1579, in a 16mo volume
in which they are ascribed to Stephen Langton. A note to
this effect was printed in the Chaucer type in Dec. 28, 1896,
and distributed to the subscribers.

41a. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOL-
UME II. APRIL: THE DOOM OF KING ACRISIUS. THE PROUD
KING. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders
29a, 29, 28a, and 28. 225 on paper at thirty shillings, 6 on
vellum at seven guineas. Dated June 24, issued Sept. 17,
1896. Published by William Morris. Bound in limp vellum.

43. THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE, AND THE BOKE OF CUPIDE,
GOD OF LOVE, OR THE CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE.
Edited by F. S. Ellis. Medium 4to. Troy type, with a note
and colophon in Chaucer type. In black and red. 300 on
paper at ten shillings, 10 on vellum at two guineas. Dated
Aug. 21, issued Nov. 2, 1896. Published at the Kelmscott
Press. Bound in half holland.

Two of the initial words from the *Chaucer* are used in this book, one at the beginning of each poem. These poems were formerly attributed to Chaucer, but recent scholarship has proved that *The Floure and the Leafe* is much later than Chaucer, and that *The Cuckow and the Nightingale* was written by Sir Thomas Clanvowe about A.D. 1405–10.

44. THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER: CONTEYNING TWELVE AEGLOGUES, PROPORTIONABLE TO THE TWELVE MONETHES. By Edmund Spenser. Edited by F. S. Ellis. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. With twelve full-page illustrations by A. J. Gaskin. 22 on paper at a guinea, 6 on vellum at three guineas. Dated Oct. 14, issued Nov. 26, 1896. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

The illustrations in this book were printed from process blocks by Walker and Boutall. By an oversight the names of author, editor, and artist were omitted from the colophon.

41b. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME III. MAY: THE STORY OF CUPID AND PSYCHE. THE WRITING ON THE IMAGE. JUNE: THE LOVE OF ALCESTIS. THE LADY OF THE LAND. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 30a, 30, 27a, 28, and 29. 225 on paper at thirty shillings, 6 on vellum at seven guineas. Dated Aug. 24, issued Dec. 5, 1896. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

41c. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME IV. JULY: THE SON OF CROESUS. THE WATCHING OF THE FALCON. AUGUST: PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE. OGIER THE DANE. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 31a, 31, 29a, 29, 28a, 28, 30a, and 30. Dated Nov. 25, 1896, issued Jan. 22, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

41d. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME V. SEPTEMBER: THE DEATH OF PARIS. THE LAND EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON. OCTOBER: THE STORY OF ACONTIUS AND CYDIPPE. THE MAN WHO NEVER LAUGHED AGAIN. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 29a, 29, 27a, 27, 28a, 28, 31a, and 31. Finished Dec. 24,

1896, issued Mar. 9, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

41e. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME VI. NOVEMBER: THE STORY OF RHODOPE. THE LOVERS OF GUDRUN. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 27a, 27, 30a, and 30. Finished Feb. 18, issued May 11, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

41f. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME VII. DECEMBER: THE GOLDEN APPLES. THE FOSTERING OF ASLAUG. JANUARY: BELLEROPHON AT ARGOS. THE RING GIVEN TO VENUS. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 29a, 29, 31, 30a, 30, 27a, and 27. Finished March 17, issued July 29, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

45. THE WATER OF THE WONDROUS ISLES BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Large 4to. Chaucer type, in double columns, with a few lines of Troy type at the end of each of the seven parts. In black and red. Borders 16a, 17a, 18a, 19, and 19a. 250 on paper at three guineas, 6 on vellum at twelve guineas. Dated April 1, issued July 29, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

Unlike *The Well at the World's End*, with which it is mainly uniform, this book has red shoulder-notes and no illustrations. Morris began the story in verse on Feb. 4, 1895. A few days later he began it afresh in alternate prose and verse; but he was again dissatisfied, and finally began it a third time in prose alone, as it now stands. It was first announced as in the press in the list of June 1, 1896, at which date the early chapters were in type, although they were not printed until about a month later. The designs for the initial words "Whilom" and "Empty" were begun by Morris shortly before his death, and were finished by R. Catterson-Smith. Another edition was published by Longmans on Oct. 1, 1897.

41g. THE EARTHLY PARADISE. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. VOLUME VIII. FEBRUARY: BELLEROPHON IN LYCIA. THE HILL OF

Venus. Epilogue. L'envoi. Medium 4to. Golden type. In black and red. Borders 28a, 28, 29a, and 29. Finished June 10, issued Sept. 27, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

The colophon of this final volume of *The Earthly Paradise* contains the following note: "The borders in this edition of *The Earthly Paradise* were designed by William Morris, except those on page 4 of volumes II., III., and IV., afterwards repeated, which were designed to match the opposite borders, under William Morris's direction, by R. Catterson-Smith; who also finished the initial words 'Whilom' and 'Empty' for *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*. All the other letters, borders, title-pages and ornaments used at the Kelmscott Press, except the Greek type in *Atalanta in Calydon*, were designed by William Morris."

46. Two Trial Pages of the Projected Edition of Lord Berners' Translation of Froissart's Chronicles. Folio. Chaucer type, with heading in Troy type. In black and red. Border 32, containing the shields of France, the Empire, and England, and a half-border containing those of Reginald Lord Cobham, Sir John Chandos, and Sir Walter Manny. 160 on vellum at a guinea, none on paper. Dated September, issued October 7, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Not bound.

It was Morris's intention to make this edition of what had been since his college days almost his favourite book, a worthy companion to the *Chaucer*. It was to have been in two volumes folio, with new cusped initials and heraldic ornaments throughout. Each volume was to have had a large frontispiece designed by Burne-Jones; the subject of the first was to have been St. George, that of the second, Fame. A trial page was set up in the Troy type soon after it came from the foundry, in Jan. 1892. Early in 1893 trial pages were set up in the Chaucer type, and in the list for March 9 of that year the book is erroneously stated to be in the press. In the three following lists it is announced as in preparation. In the list dated Dec. 1, 1893, and in the three next lists, it is again announced as in the press, and the number to be printed is given as 150. Meanwhile the printing of the *Chaucer* had

been begun, and as it was not feasible to carry on two folios at the same time, the *Froissart* again comes under the heading "in preparation" in the lists from Dec. 1, 1894, to June 1, 1896. In the prospectus of *The Shepheardes Calender*, dated Nov. 12, 1896, it is announced as abandoned. At that time about thirty-four pages were in type, but no sheet had been printed. Before the type was broken up, on Dec. 24, 1896, 32 copies of sixteen of these pages were printed and given to personal friends of the poet and printer, whose death now made the completion of the book impossible. This suggested the idea of printing two pages for wider distribution. The half-border had been engraved in April 1894 by W. Spielmeyer, but the large border only existed as a drawing. It was engraved with great skill and spirit by C. E. Keates, and the two pages were printed by Stephen Mowlem, with the help of an apprentice, in a manner worthy of the designs.

47. SIRE DEGREVAUNT. Edited by F. S. Ellis after the edition printed by J. O. Halliwell. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 1a and 1, and a woodcut designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. 350 on paper at fifteen shillings, 8 on vellum at four guineas. Dated Mar. 14, 1896, issued Nov. 12, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

This book, subjects from which were painted by Burne-Jones on the walls of the Red House, Upton, Bexley Heath, many years ago, was always a favourite with Morris. The frontispiece was not printed until October 1897, eighteen months after the text was finished.

48. SYR YSAMBRACE. Edited by F. S. Ellis after the edition printed by J. O. Halliwell from the MS. in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, with some corrections. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Borders 4a and 4, and a woodcut designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. 350 on paper at twelve shillings, 8 on vellum at four guineas. Dated July 14, issued Nov. 11, 1897. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

This is the third and last of the reprints from the Camden Society's volume of Thornton Romances. The text was all set up and partly printed by June 1896, at which time it was intended to include "Sir Eglamour" in the same volume.

49. SOME GERMAN WOODCUTS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. Being thirty-five reproductions from books that were in the library of the late William Morris. Edited, with a list of the principal woodcut books in that library, by S. C. Cockerell. Large 4to. Golden type. In red and black. 225 on paper at thirty shillings, 8 on vellum at five guineas. Dated Dec. 15, 1897, issued January 6, 1898. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

Of these thirty-five reproductions twenty-nine were all that were done of a series chosen by Morris to illustrate a catalogue of his library, and the other six were prepared by him for an article in the 4th number of *Bibliographica*, part of which is reprinted as an introduction to the book. The process blocks (with one exception) were made by Walker and Boutall, and are of the same size as the original cuts.

50. THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG AND THE FALL OF THE NIBLUNGS. BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Small folio. Chaucer type, with title and headings to the four books in Troy type. In black and red. Borders 33a and 33, and two illustrations designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. 160 on paper at six guineas, 6 on vellum at twenty guineas. Dated January 19, issued February 25, 1898. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

The two borders used in this book were almost the last that Morris designed. They were intended for an edition of *The Hill of Venus*, which was to have been written in prose by him and illustrated by Burne-Jones. The foliage was suggested by the ornament in two Psalters of the last half of the thirteenth century in the library at Kelmscott House. The initial A at the beginning of the third book was designed in March 1893 for the *Froissart*, and does not appear elsewhere.

An edition of *Sigurd the Volsung*, which Morris considered to be his masterpiece, was contemplated early in the history of the Kelmscott Press. An announcement appears in a proof of the first list, dated April 1892, but it was excluded from the list as issued in May. It did not reappear until the list of November 26, 1895, in which, the *Chaucer* being near its completion, *Sigurd* comes under the heading "in preparation," as a folio in Troy type, "with about twenty-five illus-

trations by Sir E. Burne-Jones." In the list of June 1, 1896, it is finally announced as "in the press," the number of illustrations is increased to forty, and other particulars are given. Four borders had then been designed for it, two of which were used on pages 470 and 471 of the *Chaucer*. The other two have not been used, though one of them has been engraved. Two pages only were in type, thirty-two copies of which were struck off on Jan. 11, 1897, and given to friends, with the sixteen pages of *Froissart* mentioned above.

51. THE SUNDERING FLOOD WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Overseen for the press by May Morris. 8vo. Chaucer type. In black and red. Border 10, and a map. 300 on paper at two guineas, 10 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Nov. 15, 1897, issued Feb. 25, 1898. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

This was the last romance by William Morris. He began to write it on Dec. 21, 1895, and dictated the final words on Sept. 8, 1896. The map pasted into the cover was drawn by H. Cribb for Walker and Boutall, who prepared the block. In the edition that Longmans are about to issue the bands of robbers called in the Kelmscott edition Red and Black Skinners appear correctly as Red and Black Skimmers. The name was probably suggested by that of the pirates called "escumours of the sea" on page 154 of *Godefrey of Boloyne*.

52. LOVE IS ENOUGH, OR THE FREEING OF PHARAMOND: A MORALITY. WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS. Large 4to. Troy type, with stage directions in Chaucer type. In black, red and blue. Borders 6a and 7, and two illustrations designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. 300 on paper at two guineas, 8 on vellum at ten guineas. Dated Dec. 11, 1897, issued Mar. 24, 1898. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in limp vellum.

This was the second book printed in three colours at the Kelmscott Press. As explained in the colophon, the final picture was not designed for this edition of *Love is Enough*, but for the projected edition referred to above, on page 139.

53. A NOTE BY WILLIAM MORRIS ON HIS AIMS IN FOUNDING THE KELMSCOTT PRESS, TOGETHER WITH A SHORT DESCRIPTION

OF THE PRESS BY S. C. COCKERELL, AND AN ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BOOKS PRINTED THEREAT. Octavo. Golden type, with five pages in the Troy and Chaucer types. In black and red. Borders 4a and 4, and a woodcut designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones. 525 on paper at ten shillings, 12 on vellum at two guineas. Dated March 4, issued March 24, 1898. Published at the Kelmscott Press. Bound in half holland.

The frontispiece to this book was engraved by William Morris for the projected edition of *The Earthly Paradise* described on page 139. This block and the blocks for the three ornaments on page 9 are not included among those mentioned on page 144 as having been sent to the British Museum.

VARIOUS LISTS, LEAFLETS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PRINTED AT THE KELMSCOTT PRESS.

EIGHTEEN lists of the books printed or in preparation at the Kelmscott Press were issued to booksellers and subscribers. The dates of these are May, July, and Dec. 1892; March 9, May 20, May 27, Aug. 1, and Dec. 1, 1893; March 31, April 21, July 2, Oct. 1 (a leaflet), and Dec. 1, 1894; July 1, and Nov. 26, 1895; June 1, 1896; Feb. 16, and July 28, 1897. The three lists for 1892, and some copies of that for Mar. 9, 1893, were printed on Whatman paper, the last of the stock bought for the first edition of *The Roots of the Mountains* (see page 140). Besides these, twenty-nine announcements, relating mainly to individual books, were issued; and eight leaflets, containing extracts from the lists, were printed for distribution by Messrs. Morris and Co.

The following items, as having a more permanent interest than most of these announcements, merit a full description:

1. Two forms of invitation to the annual gatherings of the Hammersmith Socialist Society on Jan. 30, 1892, and Feb. 11, 1893. Golden type.

2. A four-page leaflet for the Ancoats Brotherhood, with the frontispiece from the Kelmscott Press edition of *A Dream of John Ball* on the first page. March 1894. Golden type. 2500 copies.

3. An address to Sir Lowthian Bell, Bart., from his employés, dated 30th June 1894. 8 pages. Golden type. 250 on paper and 2 on vellum.

4. A leaflet, with fly-leaf, headed An American Memorial to Keats, together with a form of invitation to the unveiling of his bust in Hampstead Parish Church on July 16, 1894. Golden type. 750 copies.

5. A slip giving the text of a memorial to Dr. Thomas Sadler, for distribution at the unveiling of it in Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead. Nov. 1894. Golden type. 450 copies.

6. Scholarship certificates for the Technical Education Board of the London County Council, printed in the oblong borders designed for the pictures in *Chaucer's Works*. One of these borders was not used in the book, and this is its only appearance. The first certificate was printed in Nov. 1894, and was followed in Jan. 1896 by eleven certificates; in Jan. 1897 by six certificates; and in Feb. 1898 by eleven certificates, all differently worded. Golden type. The numbers varied from 12 to 2500 copies.

7. Programmes of the Kelmscott Press annual wayzgoose for the years 1892–5. These were printed without supervision from William Morris.

8. Specimen showing the three types used at the Press for insertion in the first edition of Strange's *Alphabets*. March 1895. 2000 ordinary copies and 60 on large paper.

9. Card for Associates of the Deaconess Institution for the Diocese of Rochester. One side of this card is printed in Chaucer type; on the other there is a prayer in the Troy type enclosed in a small border which was not used elsewhere. It was designed for the illustrations of a projected edition of *The House of the Wolfings*. April 1897. 250 copies.

Other works announced in the lists as in preparation, but afterwards abandoned, were *The Tragedies, Histories, and Comedies of William Shakespeare*; Caxton's *Vitas Patrum*; the *Poems* of Theodore Watts-Dunton; and *A Catalogue of the Collection of Woodcut Books, Early Printed Books, and Manuscripts at Kelmscott House*. The text of the *Shakespeare* was to have been prepared by Dr. Furnivall. The original intention, as first set out in the list of May 20, 1893, was to print it in three vols. folio. Two trial pages from *Macbeth*, printed at this time, are in existence. The same information is repeated until the list of July 2, 1895, in which the book is announced as to be a "small 4to (special size)," *i.e.* the size afterwards adopted for *The Earthly Paradise*. It was not, however, begun, nor was the volume of Mr. Watts-Dunton's *Poems*. Of the *Vitas Patrum*, which was to have been uniform with *The Golden Legend*, a prospectus and specimen were issued in March 1894, but the number of subscribers did not justify its going beyond this stage. Two trial pages of the *Catalogue* were set up; some of the material prepared for it has now appeared in *Some German Woodcuts of the Fifteenth Century*. In addition to these books, *The Hill of Venus*, as stated on page 170, was in preparation. Among works that Mr. Morris had some thought of printing may also be mentioned the *Bible, Gesta Romanorum*, Malory's *Morte Darthur, The High History of the San Graal* (translated by Dr. Sebastian Evans), *Piers Ploughman, Huon of Bordeaux*, Caxton's *Jason*, a Latin Psalter, *The Prymer or Lay Folk's Prayer-Book, Some Medieval English Songs and Music, The Pilgrim's Progress*, and a *Book of Romantic Ballads*. He was engaged on the selection of the Ballads, which he spoke of as the finest poems in our language, during his last illness.

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Pages numbered in italics are those of the annotated list in which Mr. S. C. Cockerell has given detailed and authoritative particulars of each book.

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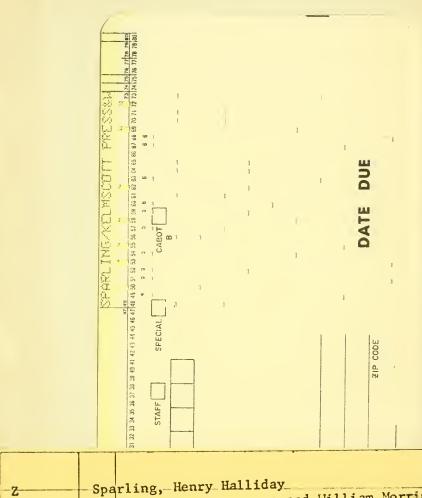PLAYS AND CONTROVERSIES. ESSAYS.

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